

**The Presbyterian-Independent Controversy
with Special Reference to
Dr. Thomas Goodwin
and the Years 1640-1660**

by

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To her,
whose sacrificial efforts,
ceaseless devotion, and indispensable encouragement,
have made the completion of this task a reality;
to my wife, Claire,
I dedicate this work.

The Preface

Dr. Thomas Goodwin's body has lain in Bunhill Fields almost two hundred and eighty years, but the controversy in which he had a part endures to the present day. The proper understanding of this controversy and Goodwin's connection with it involves an excursion of more than a day's journey into the hinterland of seventeenth-century Puritanism. If the way seems excessively long, and the study tedious, it is only because we have endeavored at all times to allow the principal participants to speak for themselves within the context of the seventeenth century...as well as against a backdrop of successive historical interpretation. And if we have left any stone unturned in our journey, it was only because it was too big to move, or too slippery to hold, or too camouflaged to see.

Those who have aided me in the course of the journey are too numerous to mention, but there are some who have lent their hands and backs in pushing our vehicle through bogs of concentrated research and whose assistance we must acknowledge. To Principal Charles S. Duthie (Scottish Congregational College), I owe my first thanks. His back may be one of the sorest for pushing. Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall (New College, University of London), has graciously talked with me about the work, and has stimulated me through constructive criticism. Dr. S. W. Carruthers (of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England), too, has shown interest in the thesis and has corresponded with me about various aspects of it. The Rev. James McEwen (now of Aberdeen University), helped in the early stages of writing. I am indebted to these men as well as to all my friends and family at home who have typed, proof read, and encouraged me along the way.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Theological dispute a characteristic of the seventeenth century:

Ear-splitting claps of theological thunder repeatedly rent the religious atmosphere of seventeenth-century England. Robert Baillie in his cheerless voice referred to "These dayes of deep and dangerous tryals, and too great defection of many."¹ Roger Williams believed that the times were "as great a Storme, as ere poor Englands Commonwealth was tost in " in spite of the fact that "Religion is our first care",² certainly a first love. And in 1645, another Presbyterian writer named Samuel Hudson,³ described the times as a

dainty criticall age...for the custom is every where now to contend and quarrel about every part of Divinity, and he is no body that cannot carp at, and wrangle against one truth or other, so that all our practical Divinity is turn'd into Polemical, and the power of godlinesse runs out into disputes, and those truths which formerly seemed most firme, plain, and smooth, are now by the crotchets of mens braines runne into such division and become so knotty and prickly, that a man knows not where to fasten on them, or how to hold them, but he shall prick his fingers with one thorny objection or other.

Such descriptions are typical and when these theological "wranglings" were finally metamorphosed in the furnace of the fantastic period of 1640-1660, the

result was igneous intrusion which has underlain English ecclesiastico-political society for three hundred years.

Church government controversy one of the most important theological discussions:

One of the most far reaching of all seventeenth-century religious quarrels was the Presbyterian-Independent controversy, which was a part of the Puritan Revolution particularly involved with the church government. Many Puritans felt that the key to most of the troubles of England lay in a solution of the church government argument. As early as 1641, George Gillespie, one of the Scottish Commissioners sent to London, wrote: "one controversie there is about the government of the Church, and it is of such consequence, that were it well resolved upon, and rightly agreed, it should facilitate a right resolution in other matters which are in question."⁴ Ten years later, Gillespie was in his grave, but the problem he had outlined was still present. William Dell, an Independent, wrote in 1651:

To preserve our peace we have in Christ, we must be instructed aright, in the matter of the Churches Government, because the mistakes in this thing is so great a cause of controversie and division among us at this day.⁵

History of the controversy:

The Presbyterian-Independent controversy had a long and involved history before the opening of the Long Parliament in 1640, but it is a hazardous task to trace its development back into the sixteenth century with any degree of accuracy. Perhaps it can be traced from the birth of Non-conformity at Frankfort-on-the-Main. under the reign of Queen Mary. Certainly, the tensions displayed there are also discernible to some extent in the Presbyterian-Independent struggles of a hundred years later.⁶

But the first real inkling we have of differences between the two groups came some years later when Robert Browne, Harrison, Barrow and Greenwood became embroiled with the Presbyterians and especially Thomas Cartwright near the three-quarter mark of the sixteenth century. Browne wrote that the Presbyters were more vicious than the prelates:

In England also I have found much more wrong done me by the preachers of discipline than by any of the bishops and more lordly usurping by them then by the other so that as in Scotland, the preachers having no names of bishops, did imprison me more wrongfully than any bishop would have done, so these having neither the name nor the power have yet usurped more than the bishops which have power. For before my first voyage beyond the sea and since my last return I have been in more than twenty prisons. And for once imprisonment by the bishops I have been more than thrice imprisoned by the preachers of their procuring .?

Seventy-five years later, the Independent leaders disclaimed all connection with the hated Brownists but in many respects, the controversy can still be traced through Robert Browne's arguments with Cartwright.

Another outbreak of the controversy can be observed in Holland during the early 1630's. There seems to have developed a classis composed of exiled Congregationalists. Trouble began, when John Paget an English Presbyterian refused to join this classis and instead, joined the Dutch reformed classis. Pamphlets soon appeared: Paget's "Twenty Propositions" were answered by Thomas Hooker, later to become famous on the other side of the Atlantic at Hartford, Connecticut. In these twenty questions the vital issues between the Presbyterian and Independent polities were first exhibited in opposition to each other.⁸ By 1641 however, the controversy was still not well known. Richard Baxter was twenty-five years old and a minister in Kidderminster, when he wrote: "Till Mr. Burton published his Protestation Protested, I never thought what Presbytery or Independency were, nor ever spake with a man that seemed to know it. And that was in 1641 when the war was brewing!"⁹ Such public innocence as Baxter's was short-lived. The presses were soon filled with literature on the

subject and one need only peruse the pages of Dexter,¹⁰ or McAlpin,¹¹ or Thomason¹² to form an idea of its extent. The books and pamphlets which flooded the country are far too numerous to discuss in detail here, but many will be cited on succeeding pages.

The Westminster Assembly convened in the middle of 1643 and began debating church government in the fall of that year, but when the Assembly was suddenly electrified in January, 1644, by the recalcitrant five (i.e. the authors of the Apologetical Narration), the controversy was begun in earnest. It raged for almost twenty years and its influence on subsequent ecclesiastical-political history can hardly be eclipsed by any other contemporary movement or debates.

Under Cromwell, these struggles continued even though the fields of conflict shifted from the Westminster Assembly to such areas as the Committee of Triers and the Committee of Visitors set up by Parliament to reform the University of Oxford. Thomas Goodwin was in Holland in the late 1630's; he was one of the most outspoken and universally respected men in the Assembly; he became a Trier under Cromwell and was the leading spirit on the Committee of Visitors sent to Oxford. He figures in almost every major encounter between Presbyterians and Independents from 1638-1680.

At the Restoration, the emphasis shifted to an Episcopalian-Non-conformist controversy and the two groups of antagonists began to draw closer together in their mutual misery under the Episcopalian persecution. By the end of the century the controversy appeared to be ended with the Heads of Agreement (1691). The two groups agreed that "in all substantials we are fully of one mind; and from this time hope more perfectly to rejoice in the Honour, Gifts, and Success of each other, as our common good."¹³ This optimistic view was shattered within a few years when the whole affair came to nought. Presbyterians and Independents were further apart than they had ever really acknowledged.

The controversy continued, but for our purposes it has no further bearing. Thomas Goodwin died in 1680 and even the Heads of Agreement is beyond the scope of our particular interest. We proceed to examine some of the main areas of difference which contributed to this lamentable conflict.

Principal divisions of the controversy:

Contrary to common opinion, the issues between Presbyterians and Independents were not confined to the ecclesiastical realm. In this thesis, we have tried not only to indicate the differences relating to the concept of the church, but we have asked a further question: "What factors encouraged these differences about church government in the Puritan Revolution?" And the answer seems to be that divergent ecclesiastical doctrines were usually due to divergent bibliological doctrines (especially of hermeneutics), which themselves were the result of the Puritan concept of eschatology. A general statement of our thesis then is: The Puritan's eschatological notions, when applied to his doctrine of biblical hermeneutics, produced (or at least contributed to) his ecclesiology.

By unravelling this supposed relationship among eschatology, ecclesiology, and bibliology, a key may be found to unlock the Presbyterian-Independent controversy.

The Puritan doctrine of the Bible will be discussed first, then his doctrine of the last times as it applies to his interpretation of the Bible, and finally, the vast differences between Presbyterianism and Congregationalism in their respective ideas of the Church.

¹Robert Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errors Of Our Time (London, 1646), "The Epistle Dedicatory", unpagged.

² Roger Williams, Queries of Highest Consideration Proposed to Mr. Tho. Goodwin, et al... (London, 1644), p. A2, A3.

³ Samuel Hudson, The Essence and Unitie of the Church Catholike Visible, and the Priority thereof in regard of Particular Churches Discussed (London, 1645), epistle "To the Reader", unpagged.

⁴ George Gillespie, An Assertion of the Government of Scotland etc. (Edinburgh, 1641), "Epistle to the Reader", unpagged. Thomas Goodwin stated in his book, Of The Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ (Works, 1696 ed.), vol. IV, p. 241: "this notion, that there is a Church on Earth, hath through... Darkness been the main occasion of all Errors about Ecclesiastical Government, Men not discerning what was the Church which Christ intended:" Likewise, Daniel Cawdry, in his Church-Reformation Promoted: etc (London: 1657), p. 20, asked this rhetorical question, "What is meant by the Church" and then answered, "This is the golden Apple of contention at this day, and the cause of that confusion in our churches; whiles many lay claim unto it, and challenge it to themselves. It were a work worthy all our prayers this day, and all our endeavours, if any could decide this quarrell"; John Owen, On Schism, as cited in James Moffatt's The Golden Book of John Owen: etc. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), p. 103, told a story of ancient Greece to illustrate the Puritan dilemma over Church government: "Athenaeus tells us of one Thrasilaus, an Athenian, who being frenetically distempered, whatever ships came into the Piraeus he looked on them and thought them his own, and rejoiced as the master of so great wealth, when he was not the owner of so much as a boat. Such a distemper of pride and folly hath in like manner seized upon those persons with whom we have to do, that wherever in Scripture they meet with the name church, presently as though they were intended by it, they rejoice in the privilege of it, when their concernment lies not at all therein"; et Samuel Rutherford, in his The Due Right of Presbyteries (London: 1644), p. 468, ended his epochal book with the prayer that "The Lord built his owne Temple in that Land, and fill it with the cloud of his glory." Few things possessed the Puritan mind more completely than their concern over the Church and its government. On the same subject, vide John Goodwin, Certain Briefe Observations... On (W. Prynne's) Twelve Questions etc. (1644), p. 1.

⁵ William Dell, The Way of true peace and unity in the true Church of Christ etc. (London, 1651), p. 180.

⁶ Phillip Schaff, Creeds of Christendom (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1878), p. 704 (Vol. I); and Albert Peel, "Co-operation of Presbyterians and Congregationalists: Some Previous Attempts", Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society, XII (1933-36) p. 147.

⁷ Robert Browne, Reformation Without Tarrying for Anie, as cited by Peel, *ibid.*, p. 148.

⁸ Raymond Stearns, Congregationalism in the Dutch Netherlands (Chicago: American Society of Church History, 1940). Some of Stearns's conclusions have been recently criticized by Geoffrey Nuttall in his book Visible Saints, *op. cit.*, p. 9, who believes that the leaders of this classis were really Presbyterians (not Independents) and that the trouble aroused therein was caused by three Independents, Hugh Peters, Thomas Hooker, and John Davenport. This is possible,

but it still does not explain why Paget refused to join it and preferred rather to have fellowship with the Dutch reformed classis. If this so-called Independent classis was really Presbyterian, why should not the Presbyterian champion, John Paget, have a part in it? Cf. Berndt Gustafsson, The Five Dissenting Brethren: A Study of the Dutch Background of their Independentism (Lund: 1955), p. 32ff.

⁹ Richard Baxter, True Historical Councils etc., p. 90, as cited by H. M. Dexter, Congregationalism of the Last 300 Years As Seen in Its Literature (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1876-79), p. 651.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ C. R. Gillett, Catalogue of the McAlpin Collection of British History and Theology (New York: Plimpton Press, 5 vol., 1927-1930).

¹² Catalogue of the Pamphlets, Books, Newspapers and Manuscripts Relating to the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and Restoration, Collected by George Thomason, 1640-1661 (London: British Museum, 2 vol., 1908).

¹³ Heads of Agreement Assented to by the United Ministers In and About London: Formerly called Presbyterians and Congregational (London: 1691), "Preface to the reader", unpagged.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN-INDEPENDENT CONTROVERSY

SECTION A: BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Between the years 1640-1660, it has been estimated that no less than 30,000 pamphlets and books on Church Government appeared in England.¹ According to Hugh Peters, it was a "pamphlet-glutted age".² There were so many tracts that Robert Baillie did not know which to send to his correspondents.³ And John Owen warned that a man who

puts forth a book sentences his reason to the gantelope
[gauntlet?] : every one will strive to have a lash at it
in its course; and he must be content to bear it.⁴

The importance of this pamphlet warfare cannot be overemphasized as a central criterion of the age. Both Presbyterians⁵ and Independents⁶ realized that public opinion must be influenced through the press if their cause was to succeed.⁷ Nor was it an accident that Scotland sent her "best penmen" to the Westminster Assembly.⁸

Not only is the ecclesiastical literature of the time multitudinous in number,⁹ but it is plagued by diffuseness. Many Puritans believed that it was a sin to leave

anything unsaid about a given subject. To them, it was better to be voluminous than to run the risk of being obscure. "Haste causeth brevity," cautioned John Goodwin, and "brevity obscurity".¹⁰ Only a discouragingly small number had read and digested William Ames's warning to authors:

all have not so great leasure, or so vast a wit, as to hunt the Partrich in the Mountains, and Woods: but that the condition of many doth rather require, that the nest it selfe, or the seat of the matter which they pursue, bee shewed without any more adoe.¹¹

Those in the forefront of the literary controversy over church government were the worst offenders. Presbyterians and Independents alike share in the blame.¹²

With such a wealth of material available,¹³ any selection is bound to be somewhat capricious. The problem then arises in selecting the best things to read on the subject of the Presbyterian-Independent controversy.

Several lists of books and pamphlets on the controversy were given by various Puritan writers of the seventeenth century.¹⁴ Thomas Goodwin presented a short bibliography in his epistle to Thomas Hooker's Survey.¹⁵ The writers of the "Epistle to the Reader" in John Cotton's Way of the Churches, also mentioned several books defending their point of view.¹⁶ A very good and yet concise summary of the differences between Presbyterians and Independents is given by Thomas Hooker in his Preface to the Survey.¹⁷ In his Church Concord Baxter quoted mostly from Norton and Rutherford in discussing the differences between the Independents and Presbyterians.¹⁸ One of the most complete bibliographies of the controversy was given by Baxter in his Directory.¹⁹

SECTION B: THOMAS GOODWIN'S BOOK ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT

There were few books on the subject of Church Government written in the seventeenth century more important than Thomas Goodwin's Of the Constitution,

Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ.²⁰ Its importance lies in several areas. First of all, it represents the matured judgment of a Puritan whose thought developed in the furnace heated by the fires of controversy which burned throughout the whole of the seventeenth century. Thomas Goodwin was born in 1600 and died in 1680. His book was not published until 1696, and there is reason to believe that publication was delayed because the writer wished to wait until his ideas were thoroughly worked out. In many respects, Goodwin's book on government was his life work. There are indications that he was working on it forty years or more. The book seems to have been begun as the result of the correspondence between Thomas Goodwin and John Goodwin in 1639-1640.²¹ The questions raised by John Goodwin seemed to start Thomas Goodwin off on the course which subsequently resulted in the later work.

A good part of the book was written during the course of the Westminster Assembly (1643-1648). Goodwin and his friends in the Assembly were asked on March 21, 1644/5, to bring in their platform of church government.²² Six days later, the Assembly again voted that "the Dissenting brethren be desired to bring in a platform of government concerning particular congregations,"²³ and on April 4, 1645, they were made into a committee for that purpose.²⁴ When this committee was formed, Thomas Goodwin asked permission to be absent from the Assembly for the purpose of spending all his time on this "Independent modell".

The progress of this Independent attempt to produce a model for church government was eagerly followed by the pamphleteers of the day. For six months, Goodwin was gone from the Assembly working feverishly on this platform. The apprehension of the Presbyterians can be seen from the accounts in Robert Baillie's Journal. In a public letter, April 25, 1645, Baillie writes:

The Independents, these six weeks, have not much troubled the Assemblie; for after we had been long time troubled with their opposition to all things,

it was found meet to put them to declare their mind positive [ly] what they would be at. This they have shifted to this day, as it was thought, not fully agreeing among themselves;... we expect daily when they shall present to us their platforme of Church Government. The Assemblie purposes not to take it into publick debate, bot to give it to some committee, that they may frame ane answer to it, if so it be found convenient.²⁵

It is apparent that the Assembly was quite willing to be rid of the Independents while they worked on their model, but they had no intention of doing anything with the platform other than killing it in some committee. Little wonder that the Independents were in no hurry to bring it in; there was no use. But the longer Goodwin stayed away from the Assembly, the more anxious Baillie became. Furthermore, events connected with the military pursuits of the civil war increased Presbyterian fears. After the great victory at Naseby, Baillie wrote:

what retardment we may have from this great victorie, obtained most by the Independent partie, and what that modell of government, whereupon Thomas Goodwin and his brethren these three moneths hes been sitting so close, that they very rarely, and he never at all hes yet appeared, we doe not know, only we expect a very great assault, how soone we know not, for a tolleration to we wot not what.²⁶

Thomas Goodwin's ominous absence from the Assembly plainly worried Baillie; it is obvious that most of his trepidation centered on Goodwin more than on any other of the Assembly Independents.²⁷ By the first of September, 1645, Baillie was beginning to suspect that the long awaited platform would never appear:

The Independents and sects are quiet, injoying peaceably all their desyres, and increasing daily their partie: They speak no more of bringing their modell in the Assemblie.²⁸

His fears were well founded, because on October 14, 1645, he disgustedly reported:

We were in a long expectation of a modell from the Independents; but yesterday, after seven months waiting, they have scorned us. The Assembly haveing put them to it, to make a report of their diligence, they gave us in a sheet or two of injurious reasons why they would not give us any declaration of their tenets. We have appointed a committee to answer that lybell.²⁹

The Minutes of the Westminster Assembly record that on November 12, 1645, these reasons of the Dissenting Brethren were printed and that Dr. Gouge acquainted the Assembly with the fact.³⁰ The Assembly therefore voted to hurry its answer to them.³¹ In their A Copy of a Remonstrance,³² the brethren had given several reasons for their refusal to bring in their platform. They had complained that although the Independents had at last been given the right to form themselves into a committee to bring in their model of government, yet in reality, most of the parts of Presbytery had already been voted i.e. ordination by a Presbytery, one Presbytery over many local churches, subordination of synods, etc. .³³ Not only that, but the Assembly had never said what it would do with the Independent model once it was given in.³⁴ There was a strong suspicion that the Presbyterians would never give the model a debate even after it was submitted:

we think that this Assembly hath no cause now to require a Report of us, nor will that our Report be of any use seeing that Reports are for Debates, and Debates are for Results to be sent up to the Honorable House, who have already voted another form of Government then what we shall present.³⁵

The intensive research and effort which is obvious to the reader of Thomas Goodwin's book on church government was almost certainly a product of that seven months absence from the Westminster Assembly, and although the Independents' model never appeared in print, there can be little doubt that Thomas Goodwin's Constitution of Churches would have practically comprised that model had it ever appeared.³⁶

The value of the book consists, therefore, in the fact that it represents not only the thought of a leading Congregationalist Puritan, but also that it especially presents that thought as it was influenced by the tremendous arguments of Presbyterian Puritans within the Westminster Assembly. It is too bad that it did not appear in the 1640's, because coming out as it did in 1696, many years after the great Presbyterian apologists were gone, there has never been an adequate

answer by those of the contrary opinions to Goodwin's accomplishment.³⁷

The value of the book is greater to historians of the Westminster Assembly than many others which have had more influence in some respects. It gives many sidelights on debates in the Assembly which are lacking in the books of John Cotton, Richard Mather, Thomas Hooker, or even John Owen, none of whom were present at Westminster. Goodwin's views were formed in the midst of continuous attack from those of other ecclesiastical convictions i.e. Presbyterians and Anglicans whereas Congregationalist defenders in New England were too far removed to develop their theories under the heavy fire of opposing divines; theirs were more theoretical. Furthermore, the thousands and thousands of tracts rolling off the presses at such an alarming rate undoubtedly exercised greater influence on Puritans in England than on those in New England. Many of these tracts found their way across the Atlantic, but it took two or three years for many of them to reach the hands of American readers...long after the divines in England had seen, read, and answered them.

One might ask, "Why was there a necessity for Goodwin to write a defense of Congregational polity, when there were so many able apologies already in being?" Thomas Hooker's Survey, Cotton's Way of the Churches, and others were very well read,³⁸ but there are at least three contributing factors. First of all, Goodwin was the only one of the great Congregational leaders attending the Assembly. His views are peculiarly significant for understanding the subtle differences between Presbyterians and Independents. Secondly, Goodwin did not agree with Cotton on many points and he may well have felt that he must present his own views in contradistinction to Cotton's. If Goodwin had agreed wholeheartedly with John Cotton, then he would undoubtedly have persuaded his brethren to submit one of Cotton's books as their long awaited "modell" thereby saving themselves many months of effort. That they did not consider Cotton's ideas acceptable is evident

from many other facts also.³⁹

A third, and perhaps more pertinent reason, for Thomas Goodwin's wishing to produce a book of his own, was that there was so much clamor for the Independent platform by almost every Presbyterian writer of the time.⁴⁰ There can be little doubt that Goodwin became more and more susceptible to these innuendos as time went on.⁴¹

Thomas Goodwin's book, The Constitution of Churches, first appeared in print sixteen years after the death of the author, in 1696.⁴² Because the Westminster Assembly had ceased almost fifty years before, historians have not considered it as a primary source of material for the debates in that famous sederunt. This is a very great error, because there are ample reasons to suggest that the book was written in the 1640's, yet not printed until later for some unknown reason. The following are indicative: (1) Goodwin refers to the king as if he were still alive.⁴³ (2) Thomas Goodwin describes the existence of Presbyterianism in such terms that it could only fit in with the 1640's.⁴⁴ (3) There is a marginal reference inserted by the editors which says that "this Discourse was written in 1646. When there were those heats against the Dissenting Brethren, who asserted the Congregational way of Churches, et therefore all must be understood as relating to those times."⁴⁵ (4) Sometimes, Goodwin seems to have veiled references to the tremendous pamphlet warfare in the 1640's.⁴⁶ (5) There is a parallel with the Introduction to Thomas Hooker's Survey written in 1648, which may indicate that Goodwin copied out part of his notes in order to write the introduction.⁴⁷ (6) The strongest reason for dating Goodwin's book in the 1640's is the fact that he often refers to the Westminster Assembly in the present tense....as if it were still sitting.⁴⁸

If Thomas Goodwin did write his book on Government in the 1640's as appears likely from the internal evidence (supra), then the question immediately arises,

"Why did he not publish it before his death?" Here we must speculate. Perhaps it was because he was such a thorough person and wished to see exactly what the Presbyterians would do before he produced his final platform. Again, it may have been lack of time, because he was swept up in a great rush of events after Cromwell came to power. Later on in the 1650's he wished to retire and to finish some books he had begun.⁴⁹ Another possible reason for his delay in publishing his own book was that he felt that Hooker's Survey was to be the long awaited "modell".⁵⁰ A further suggestion might be centered in Goodwin's pessimism. In Hooker's Survey, he wrote:

from our first entrance into this conflict [i.e. over church government] , I made account and lookt for it, That this truth [i.e. Independency] and all that should be said for it, was ordained as Christ...to be as a seede of corne, which unlesse it fall to the ground and dye, and this perhaps together with some of the persons that professe it, it brings not forth much fruit⁵¹

It may very well have been that Thomas Goodwin felt that Independency would not triumph until some of its early leaders had passed away; he may even have requested that his book on government be published only after his death. Such a thing would have suited his character, overly stern, solemn, and rather morbid.

The one main question which remains for us to discuss concerning the Constitution of Churches is its possible relation to the fourteen or fifteen volumes of notes which Thomas Goodwin is supposed to have taken at the Westminster Assembly.⁵² A very strong case could be made to support the contention that this book on government is nothing other than the reworked notes which Goodwin took at the Assembly. It was once thought that these notes were in the Williams Library, but these turned out to be the official minutes later published by Mitchell and Struthers. Goodwin's notes have apparently been "lost" although they were known up till the middle of the eighteenth century. The son of Thomas Goodwin wrote in the "Life" of his father, that these fifteen volumes were still in his

possession.⁵³ The question is, when was this life written? The Constitution of Churches appeared in 1696, and if the son wrote the life after this, then our theory is not valid, because the notes were then spoken of as being separate from the book on Government. But if, on the other hand, "An Account of the Author's Life from his own Memoirs" was written before the edition 1696, then it is still feasible that the notes of the Westminster Assembly and the book on government are one and the same in substance.⁵⁴

Of course, if this theory be true, then Thomas Goodwin's book is a first class record of the debates in the Assembly ...and written from the standpoint of the Independents. It was written by a divine who led in those debates and whose arguments were molded by the conflict with his learned contemporaries in the Assembly. Historians of the Westminster Assembly have slighted this book and almost invariably done injustice to the Independents by so doing. The only other sources of material we have about the sederunt are from the pens of Presbyterian divines. Furthermore, if this theory be true, then it would partially explain why we have no notes extant today. The editors did not publish them because they were already included in the Constitution of Churches. The notes may yet turn up some day, but if this theory is valid, then we already have them in book form. It is certain that some material from the notes found its way into the Constitution of Churches. How much of it which did so is conjectural, but there is very little likelihood that the book on government had no connection with these fifteen volumes of Westminster Assembly notes. Many of the arguments omitted by Gillespie, Lightfoot, and the official minutes, are more complete in Thomas Goodwin's book. No doubt, if this publication were given its proper place among the materials of the Westminster Assembly, the Independents would appear in a much stronger light than they do now. It is perhaps the only document extant which can give us a balanced view of the workings of the Assembly, taken in

conjunction with the other primary source materials.

¹Vide Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom with A History and Critical Notes. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878), p. 701, I; et James Heron, A Short History of Puritanism (Edinburgh T. & T. Clark, 1908), p. 169. G. P. Gooch, writing in the English Historical Review (1896), p. 579, spoke of the "2,000 volumes" of pamphlet literature written during the period of the Puritan revolution. This is cited by James Moffat, The Golden Book of John Owen (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), p. xvi. Most historians have agreed that the beginning of this marvelous era of pamphleteering was the publishing in 1640 of Bishop Joseph Hall's treatise on Episcopacy by Divine Right. Vide e.g. Henry W. Clark, History of English Nonconformity from Wiclif to the Close of the Nineteenth Century (London: Chapman and Hall, Limited, 1911), p. 319, I; et Heron, op. cit., p. 168. Bishop Hall's book was answered by Smectymnuans (Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, William Spurstow), who published the first true defence of Presbyterianism since Cartwright. The Independent leaders did not enter the book lists until after 1643/4. They claimed in their Apologeticall Narration, pp. 15, 25, that they had published nothing prior to it. But this does not mean that there had been no pamphlets published before this date. George Gillespie, in his An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland, etc. (Edinburgh: 1641), "To the Reader", unpagged, said that there were some besides Episcopalians who had written against Presbytery prior to 1641. The pamphlet war was on.

²Richard Mather, Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed, etc. (London: 1643), "Epistle to the Reader", unpagged.

³David Laing (ed.), The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, 1841), p. 271, II, in a letter to R. Ramsay, May 4, 1645, "Pamphlets I will send you none, there are so many, and I cannot choise [sic]; for I have some hundreds to myself."

⁴Cited in Moffat, Golden Book, op. cit., p. 204.

⁵E.g. Richard Vines, in his The Authours, Nature, and Danger of Haeresie. (London: 1647), p. 66, bemoans the fact that the press is being misused, "Nor is it the Pulpit which can keep off the infection whiles the poison is carried up and downe in books, and cryed at mens doors every day."

⁶E.g. the anonymous author of Tolleration Justified, and Persecution condemn'd. In An Answer or Examination, of the London-Ministers Letter etc. (London: 1646), p. 2, complains that the Presbyterians are trying "to make the separation and Independents odious by scandals and untrue reports of them, in confidence of having the presse in their own hands." That Independents saw the importance of winning public recognition is also evident from the fact that many Congregationalists who had fled to Holland under Laud were busy writing and sending books back to the nonconformists in England. Vide Stearns, op. cit., p. 57.

⁷William Haller (ed.) Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution 1638-1647 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), p. 46, I, asserts that the pamphlet

war of 1643, "pointed unmistakably to the emergence of public opinion as a decisive factor in public life." It was essential for every party to put its best foot forward for the public to have the best possible view of them. Thus, the Westminster Assembly was perturbed when some of its press releases were garbled and misprinted. Vide Alexander F. Mitchell, The Westminster Assembly (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1883), p. 301.

⁸ Baillie, Letters and Journals, op. cit., p. 70, II, June 2, 1643.

⁹ George Newton Conklin, Biblical Criticism and Heresy in Milton (New York: Kings Crown Press, Columbia University, 1949), p. 11, describes the situation in these words: "whole sections of library stacks would be required to shelve even a decade's output, and the recorded exegetical bibliography of the whole age requires several volumes." Puritans like Richard Baxter were known for their voluminous literary productions. A. G. Mathews, "Bibliography of Richard Baxter", Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society, vol. 11 (1930-32), p. 102, ff. p. 189 ff, traced some 141 works of Baxter besides some 42 other contributions such as poems, sermons, prefaces to others' books, etc. Hugh Martin, in his Puritanism and Richard Baxter (London: Student Christian Movement, 1954), p. 125, traced 168 books which Baxter wrote thereby exceeding Mathews's figure. In reading much of this Puritan literature, the wish often flashes across the reader's mind, that there had been more like John Conant, the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford after Owen. Accounts indicate that he was so modest that he burnt all of his lectures and sermons after preaching them. Wood said that "he hath published nothing", which was certainly unusual for the age! Vide Montagu Burrows, The Register of the Visitors of the University of Oxford, from A.D. 1647 to 1658 (Printed for the Camden Society, 1881), p. xlix. The pity was that more did not follow his example!

¹⁰ John Goodwin, A Reply of two of the brethren to A. S. Adam Steuart etc. (London: 1644), "A Word to the Reader", unpagged.

¹¹ William Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the holy Scriptures, and the Interpreters thereof, and brought into Method. (London: n.d.), "A Brief Premonition, or forewarning of the Author, thouching the reason of his purpose," unpagged. Richard Byfield, The Power of the Christ of God etc. (London: 1641), epistle "To the Reader" unpagged, evidently took Ames's advice and apologized for the brevity of his treatise (being only 46 pages long!): "Here you are not sent to hunt the Partridge in the Mountaines, or the Deere in the Forrest, but you are brought to the very nest and seate of the thing. The brevity helps the memory."

¹² John Goodwin had this complaint about some writers: "Some write so voluminous, heaping up so many distinctions about it i.e. church government, that they rather darken the truth then set it forth, rather intangle a mans understanding then informe it". Vide his Certain briefe Observations and Antiquaeries: On Master Prin's Twelve Questions About Church Government etc. (London: 1644), p. 1. Thomas Edwards's Antapologia: Or A Full Answer to the Apologeticall Narration of Mr. Goodwin, et al. (London: 1646), was a book of 259 pages of close print to answer the Apologeticall Narration which had less than fifty pages. Two of the most influencial books on Congregational polity were no better. Thomas Hooker's A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline. etc. (London: 1648), was a very lengthy book of four parts. Part I had fifteen chapters

and 296 pages; Part II had 3 chaps. and 90 pages; Part III had 3 chaps. and 46 pages; et Part IV contained 3 chaps. and 59 pages.....a grand total of 24 chapters and 491 pages of close print. Thomas Goodwin's *Of the Constitution Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ* (Works, 1696 ed.), vol. IV, had 408 large pages. The only redeeming feature about Goodwin's book is that he did summarize the main points in his *The Government and Discipline of the Churches of Christ*, propos'd familiarly by way of Question and Answer (Works, 1696 ed.), vol. IV, which only had some 35 pages. Even these lengthy discourses cannot complete with the works of Samuel Rutherford on Presbyterianism or with a book like Baxter's *Directory*. The length of the last book almost staggers the imagination.

¹³ Three of the best collections of literature are the McAlpin in Union Theological Seminary in New York, the Thomason in the British Museum, and the H. M. Dexter in Yale Divinity School. The Catalogues are the Catalogue of the McAlpin Collection of British History and Theology (New York: Plimpton Press, 1927-1930), ed. by Charles Ripley Gillett; The Catalogue of the Pamphlets, Books, Newspapers, and Manuscripts Relating to the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and Restoration, Collected by George Thomason, 1640-1661. (London: British Museum, 1908) ed. by G.K. Fortescue; et Henry Martyn Dexter, *The Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years As Seen in Its Literature* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1876-79). The McAlpin is the most reliable catalogue of the three. Vide David W. Petegorsky, *Left Wing Democracy in the English Civil War: A Study of the Social Philosophy of Gerrard Winstanley* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1940), p.251; S.W. Carruthers, "Catalogue of the McAlpin Collection of British History and Theology. Union Theological Seminary, New York", *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England*, vol.4 (1928-1931), p.184; et Haller, *Tracts on Liberty*, op. cit., p.144, I, who says that it is "the most useful bibliographical tool for dealing with the pamphlets of the period." Most writers have cautioned against relying too strongly on the accuracy of the Thomason catalogue. Vide e.g. Petegorsky, op. cit., p.251; et Haller, op. cit., p.143, I, "the Catalogue is indispensable but unreliable... The index is inaccurate, incomplete, and confused." Haller also says that Dexter's list is "somewhat inaccurate" (p.144, I, *ibid.*). In spite of this many historians have referred approvingly to Dexter's list. Vide e.g. Albert Peel, *The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, 1658* (London: Independent Press, 1939), p.7n. Haller (*supra*) is a good key with which to begin any study of these pamphlet collections. Wilbur K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England 1640-1660* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1938), pp.302-306 gives a lengthy list of pamphlets published by Presbyterians between 1644-1648. Besides lists such as these, there is a vast amount of modern literature on the subject of Puritanism, including the enormous quantity of periodical literature. One periodical is *Church History*, published by the American Society of Church History. This is published quarterly and usually has about three articles. Between the years 1934-1957, 25 issues contained at least one article on Puritanism (sometimes there were more than one article in an issue). And as there were only 56 issues all told during this period, then it means that the subject of Puritanism appeared in almost half of the entire series of publications. A safe estimate would be that at least one third of all the articles in this magazine have been devoted to seventeenth century Puritanism during the years 1934-1957. Another fruitful field of research is the many record publications of various county and private historical societies in England, which publish out of the way journals, diaries, papers, manuscripts, etc. An excellent guide to this material is Robert Somerville's *Handlist of Record Publications* (London: published by the British Records

Association, 1951).

¹⁴Vide the annotated bibliography for this present author's suggestions as to the best books on the controversy.

¹⁵Thomas Hooker, Survey, op. cit., "Epistle", unpag. The books on Independency which Goodwin recommended were: John Norton's answer to Apollonius, Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Allen in their defence of the nine questions and positions from New England, the reasons and answers of the Dissenting Brethren in the Assembly, transactions in the Committee on Accommodation, and Mr. Cotton's answer to Mr. Bayly.

¹⁶John Cotton, The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England, etc. (London: 1645), unpag. These writers list the following books on Independency: The answer to thirty two questions by the elders of New England, the Apologeticall Narration, Cotton's Keys, the Reasons of the Dissenting Brethren, Thomas Goodwin's complete "modell" (then in process of composition), the seven propositions of the Independents to the sub-committee of accommodation. and now the Way of the Churches.

¹⁷Hooker, Survey, op. cit., unpag.

¹⁸Richard Baxter, Church Concord: etc. (London: 1691). Norton's book called Responsio ad Totam Quaestionum Syllogen a clarissimo Viro Domino Guilielmo Apollonio etc. (Londini: 1648), was highly thought of and Benjamin Hanbury, Historical Memorials Relating to the Independents, etc. (London: printed for the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1839-1844), p.427, II, says that it was the first book published in Latin from New England. Thomas Fuller, Church History, op. cit., p.467, III, said of Norton's book: "of all the authors I have perused concerning the opinions of these Dissenting Brethren, none to me was more informative than Mr. John Norton (one of no less learning than modesty), minister in New England, in his answer to Apollonius, pastor in the church of Middleburgh."

¹⁹Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory: etc. (London: 1678), part III, p.197, gives a bibliography of twelve different controversies raging in the seventeenth century: (1) Protestants vs. Papists; (2) predestination, grace, free will; (3) Socinianism and Arianism; (4) Of Justification; (5) Antinomianism and libertinism; (6) Infant baptism; (7) Lord's Day vs. Christian Sabbath; (8) Diocesan prelacy; (9) English conformity including the liturgy and ceremonies; (10) Erastianism; (11) Separation; (12) Independency. On this last controversy, Baxter lists the following on the Independent side: Norton, Hooker, Allen and Shepherd, Burton, Apologeticall Narration, Reasons, and Owen's catechism. For the Presbyterians, he mentions John Ball, Rutherford, Assembly's reply to the Reasons, Jus Divinum of the London ministers, Cawdry against Owen and Ben Camfield against Owen's catechism.

²⁰Horton Davies, The Worship of the English Puritans (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1948), p.233, said that the "fullest account of the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline is that by Thomas Goodwin in his book." John Hunt, Religious Thought in England from the Reformation to the End of the Last Century (London: Strathan & Co., 1873), pp.214-215, I, also has a discussion of Goodwin's book on church government.

²¹Two Letters Which passed between the Reverend Mr. John Goodwin and the

Author (Works of Thomas Goodwin, 1696 ed.), p. 47, IV, "I shall," wrote Thomas, "God willing, put myself to further Pains, yet to show more largely the fundation of our Church-work, and so of this Practice; and in doing this I shall take the larger Compass, and require the more time." Four years later, Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye spoke in the preface to John Cotton's The Keyes Of the Kingdom of Heaven etc. (London: 1644), p. 8, of "our owne Notes and transcripts written long ago" on the subject of church government. This must indicate that considerable progress had been made from the time of the John Goodwin correspondence four years before.

²² Mitchell et Struthers, Minutes, op. cit. p. 68, Sess. 402.

²³ Ibid., p. 73, Sess. 404, March 27, 1644/5. ²⁴ Ibid., p. 76, Sess. 410.

²⁵ Baillie, Letters and Journals, op. cit., p. 266, II.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 291, II, public letter, July 1, 1645.

²⁷ In another letter, undated, 1645, Baillie reported: "since Apryle we have not been much troubled with the Independents; for since that time they have been about the modell of their way, and have not since much minded the Assemblie; and what they have done, all yet is secret. Many think they cannot agree among themselves" (ibid., p. 306, II). Baillie was wrong about the cause for delay. Subsequent history shows that the Independents were remarkably in agreement considering that they had no precedent to follow. Furthermore, Thomas Goodwin's usual practice was to avoid hasty writing, but rather always to insist on thoroughness.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 315, II, to Spang, Sept. 5, 1645. Cf. Mitchell et Struthers, Minutes, op. cit., p. 132, Sess. 506, Sept. 22, 1645. The Assembly was rapidly becoming impatient with the Independents for not producing their model. On this day, the Assembly voted to require that the Dissenting Brethren bring in their model (or at least an interim report) on Monday a fortnight ahead. On Oct. 6, 1645 Nye reported for the Committee that they needed more time and that "some of the brethren were out of town" (ibid., p. 135, Sess. 512). As a result of this request, the Assembly voted to give them another week to report.

²⁹ Baillie, Letters and Journals, op. cit., p. 318, II, Sept. 5, 1645, to Spang. Cf. Minutes, op. cit., p. 148, Sess. 517, Oct. 13, 1645. Simpson reported from the committee and gave in certain "reasons why they did not think fit to bring in their model of government."

³⁰ Minutes, op. cit., p. 162, Sess. 533.

³¹ Part of the Assembly's consternation was well founded, because the Parliament, as a result of the printing of these reasons, sent down an order for a Committee of Accommodation to be set up. Vide Minutes, op. cit., p. 163, Sess. 536, Nov. 17, 1645.

³² The full title was A Copy of a Remonstrance Lately Delivered in to the Assembly. By Thomas Goodwin. Jerem. Burroughs. William Greenhill. William Bridge. Philip Nye. Sidrach Simson. and William Carter. Declaring the Grounds and Reasons of their declining to bring in to the Assembly, their Modell of Church Government. (London: 1645). The tract was actually published by some anonymous person against the wishes of the authors of it. According to this publisher, he

printed it because of Presbyterian slanders against the Independents, viz. that "they had in their conceptions some Chimera, or some Utopian Frame, which in the issue would prove either absortive or ridiculous" (To the Reader", p.2.).

³³ Copy of a Remonstrance, op. cit., p. 6.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 8. That this accusation was true is evident from Baillie's testimony. Vide supra.

³⁶ That Thomas Goodwin's model was considered to be the official Independent platform of government was probably the reason he was chosen by Parliament to help edit the debates in the Assembly over Presbytery and Independency. Vide The Grand Debate Concerning Presbytery and Independency By the Assembly of Divines convened at Westminster by authority of Parliament, etc. (London: 1652). The act of Parliament is given in an unpagged sheet prefixed to this tract: "Die Jovis. 3. Febr. 1647 1648 Ordered by the Lords in Parliament Assembled, That Mr. Thomas Goodwin and Mr. Whitaker, shall have the oversight and perusal of such Papers and Writings as Mr. Byfield hath order to Print; And that the said Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Whitaker have free liberty to peruse the Originals of the said Papers and Writings before they go to the presse." Thomas Goodwin's experience working on the model in the Assembly and his experience preparing the Grand Debate certainly gave him much opportunity to work on his Constitution of Churches which must have comprised his model. The book was not yet finished when Goodwin wrote to the Rev. Robert Asty of Norwich, from London, on March 25, 1675. He speaks only of his notes on government, evidently still in a state of being processed. Vide Works (1696 ed.), vol. IV, for this letter, p. 51. This means that Goodwin possibly spent part of the last four years of his life (1675-1679) working on this book.

³⁷ So far as we can gather from the pages of H. M. Dexter, op. cit., there has never been any Presbyterian answer to this book of Thomas Goodwin.

³⁸ John Lightfoot's The Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines: etc. (London: ed. by John Rogers Pitman, Works, Vol. XIII, 1824), p. 119, Jan. 24, records one possible reason for Goodwin's desire to prepare a book of his own. On that day (and on other occasions) the Scottish Commissioners distributed copies of their government to the members of the Assembly. It is very probable that such occurrences only encouraged the Independents to produce their own literature as rapidly as possible.

³⁹ Vide infra on the differences between Cotton and Goodwin over the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.

⁴⁰ Some of these Presbyterian requests for the Independent model are the following: Daniel Cawdrey, The Inconsistencie of the Independent Way, With Scripture and It Self. etc. (London: 1651), "The Epistle to the Dissenting Brethren", unpagged. Cawdrey complains that he is still waiting for the Independent model. John Dury, Epistolary Discourse to Tho. Goodwin, et al. (London: 1644), p. 17. Dury says that he is glad to see the Apologeticall Narration, because "it hath given some generall satisfaction in that which I did require hitherto from them, but could never obtain, which was to know the true point of difference betwixt them and the other Reformed Churches." Again, Dury speaks of the Independents' "great silence concerning the Rules of Government which is like a guard of darknesse over their proceedings" (ibid., p. 30). John Vicars,

Schimastick Sifted, op. cit., p. 18, spoke of the "shamelesse and slanderous Remonstrance against the Assembly of Divines" because of the Independent refusal to bring in their platform. Vicars said that the Independents had been urged to publish their platform by all ministers in London as well as by the Assembly (loc. cit.) and at last Thomas Goodwin began work on it. "All stood, as it were gaping and gazing triumphantly, to see it, but it never appeared (p. 19, *ibid*). Thomas Edwards, *Antapologia*, op. cit., p. 9, also complained that the Independents still had not produced their model. William Rathband, *A Briefe Narration of Some Church Courses Held in Opinion and Practise in the Churches lately erected in New England* (London: 1644), "Preface to the Reader", unpagged, had a similar grievance. Baillie in his *A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time* (London: 1646), p. 101, said that even if the Independents ever did produce their model (and he doubted that they would) there could be no guarantee that the Independent doctrine of progressive interpretation wouldn't cause them to change their platform at any given time. The anonymous writer of the *Vindiciae Clavium: etc.* (London: 1645), in his "To the Reader", unpagged, also mauls the Independents for not bringing out their model. Apollonius, *A Consideration of Certain Controversies at this time agitated in the Kingdome of England, Concerning the Government of the Church of God: etc.* (London: 1645), "Epistle to the Synod at London," unpagged, wrote, "If some of those brethren of the contrary opinion [i.e. Independents] do in ought differ from them [i.e. the Reformed Churches] we wish they would declare so much by publike writing, and expresse it by common consent, . . . For not without cause do the godly conceive that those are hatching some monster, that use shifts, and dare not with open face clearly set downe and maintaine their opinions." Et A Letter of the Ministers of the City of London, Presented the first of Jan. 1645. to the Reverend Assembly of Divines Sitting at Westminster by Authority of Parliament, Against toleration. (London: 1645), p. 2, makes the point that toleration of the Independents would be "extreamly unseasonable and praeproperous [sic] because It is not yet known what the government of the Independent is, neither would they ever yet vouchsafe to let the world know what they hold in that point."

⁴¹ Many Independent writers outside the Assembly were keenly aware of the accusations made against them for not producing their model. Henry Burton, *Conformities deformity*, etc. (London: 1646), p. 9, referred to the Independent model; likewise the anonymous author of *Toleration Justified*, op. cit., p. 5, who tries to vindicate the Independents from the Presbyterian charges. The authors of the "Epistle to the Reader", unpagged, Cotton's *Way of the Churches*, op. cit., gave a whole list of books which showed that Congregationalists were not ashamed of their platform. . . . and that Presbyterians were not correct in their assertions.

⁴² We have found no reference to its ever having been circulated in manuscript form before publication. It was common practice for books to be circulated prior to publication. E.g. Thomas Edwards, in his *Antapologia*, op. cit., "To the Christian Reader", unpagged, complained that his book was attacked in print five days before it ever came off the presses. In the same book, Edwards accused the Apologists of having circulated their views by letter and manuscript for several years before they published their *Narration* (vide p. 7, *Antapologia*). The authors of the "Epistle to the Reader", unpagged, of Cotton's *Way of the Churches*, op. cit., said that that book, also, was attacked in print before the licensers ever allowed it to be printed. John Wingate Thornton, *The Historical Relation of New England to the English Commonwealth* (Boston: 1874, private printing), p. 53n., reported that some of John Cotton's books circulated in manuscript form for twenty years before they were ever published. It seems very unlikely that Thomas Goodwin's book would have escaped notice had it been circulated in manuscript form before it was finally printed.

⁴³ Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 221, mispaged, it should be p. 201. He speaks of Parliament and the king operating jointly as always. This could not be in the period 1649-1660 when the king was dead and there was only a Parliament without a king. Nor could it refer to a time after 1660 when there was no more opportunity for the king and Parliament to cooperate and further the cause of Puritanism... as Goodwin wishes were the case now. Furthermore, on p. 367, ibid., he attempts to justify liberty by appealing to Charles as if he were still alive. Such an appeal had to be prior to 1649 when Charles was put to death.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 78, he speaks of the "Classical Churches as are now amongst us" which fits the 1640's better than the 1650's and not at all the Restoration times. He refers to the interest in the Reformed Churches when speaking of affairs in England (p. 25, ibid.). The period immediately following the publication of the Apologeticall Narration (ca. 1644) would better fit this description. Cf. p. 29 for another description which seems to fit the 1640's more than any other time.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 399. This marginal reference seems to refer immediately to Book VII, Chap. XIII, entitled, "What Liberty of Conscience is to be indulged. That Peace and Love is the great Law of Christ that is to be observed among Christians, who ought therefore to bear with one another. What Principles and Practices are contrary to this Law." It would appear that this marginal reference should be confined to this particular section because we have found references and allusions to things after 1646 and to things before 1646. Probably, it would best fit in with the controversy over the Apologeticall Narration. All of these marginal references seem to have been inserted by the editors and not by Goodwin himself. They could therefore be incorrect. E.g. p. 65, ibid., there is a reference to Goodwin's book on the Revelation which was not published till after he died. It is obvious that this was added by the editors and not inserted by Thomas Goodwin himself. There is a strong indication that none of the marginal notes were the product of the author's pen. In which case, any appeal to such notes to establish the date of writing would be open to criticism, because neither of the two editors were associated with Goodwin in those early years when he was writing his "modell".

⁴⁶ Vide p. 136, ibid. where he appears to be trying to answer some tract of the day such as Prynne's Twelve Questions. This is a highly speculative procedure, however, and is not conclusive in itself.

⁴⁷ Vide pp. 176, 202, ibid. et cf. Goodwin's epistle to Hooker's Survey, unpagged, on the subject of a jure divino polity.

⁴⁸ Vide e.g. p. 113, ibid., "the Assembly have in their vote acknowledged Mat. 18. to intend a particular Church, and the Eldership thereof to be a Church." This sounds as though it were part of Goodwin's notes taken in the Assembly. He speaks of the papers given in by the Commissioners of Scotland as though it were a recent event still fresh in his mind, not a happening twenty or thirty years in the past (vide p. 114, ibid.). Once, he speaks as though he were taking part in a present debate: "the proposition is so cast, that we must directly oppose it" (p. 176, ibid.). Another time, he seems to be addressing the Assembly as though this were part of one of his speeches delivered there and he does so in the present tense. (p. 221, ibid.). He speaks about the argument over the Reasons of the Dissenting Brethren (pp. 228, 152, ibid.). But on p. 233, ibid., he refers to "the Assembly that now sitteth".

⁴⁹ Vide appendix article on Goodwin's life.

⁵⁰ Vide epistle to Hooker's Survey, op. cit., unpagd.

⁵¹ Ibid., Although Goodwin was thinking primarily of Hooker's departure, it is not difficult to read, underneath and to see some of Goodwin's own preoccupation with death. Cf. Goodwin's aphorisms in his Works (1861 ed.), p.131f., vol. XII, most of which are on the subject of death. If this theory be correct, then it would also explain why he never allowed his book to circulate in manuscript form.

⁵² Anthony A. Wood, in the Athenae Oxonienses: an exact History of all the writers and bishops who have had their education in the University of Oxford (London: ed. by Philip Bliss, 1813 on), p.180, IV, said that Goodwin's 14 or 15 vols. of notes were still extant in his day. Edmund Calamy, An Abridgement of Mr. Baxter's History of His Life and Time, etc. (London:1713), p.60, II, said that they "are yet preserv'd", but we cannot be certain that the author was not relying on testimony rather than personal experience. Samuel Palmer, The Nonconformist's Memorial: etc (London: 1775), p.186, I, mentions these vols. of notes taken by Goodwin, but fails to indicate whether he had ever seen them. Very possibly, he was depending entirely on Calamy. At least three writers have given out erroneous information concerning Goodwin's Assembly notes. Robert Halley in his "Memoir of Thomas Goodwin", The Works of Thomas Goodwin, D.D. (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1861), vol. II., p. xxx, records: "His notes, taken for the most part in short-hand, fill fourteen volumes, which are preserved in Dr. Williams's Library in Redcross Street." W.M. Hetherington, History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (Edinburgh: James Gemmell, fourth edition edited by Robert Williamson, 1878), p.v, makes the same mistake about the three volumes in Dr. Williams's Library. Alfred W. Light, Bunhill Fields (London: C.J. Farncombe & Sons, Ltd., second edition, 1915), p.40, asserted that Goodwin "afterwards published his notes of these transactions," but so far as we know, Goodwin never published his notes unless they are included in his book on government. The official minutes of the Westminster Assembly were thought to have been lost in the great fire of London up until the end of the nineteenth century. Vide John Aiton, The Life and Times of Alexander Henderson etc. (Edinburgh: Fraser & Co., 1836), p.520, et W.M. Hetherington, History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (Edinburgh: James Gemmell, fourth edition, edited by Robert Williamson, 1878), preface, p.iv. Hetherington says that one copy of the minutes went to the library of Sion College, but if so, it perished in the fire which destroyed the House of Commons in 1834. Ibid., p.v. The fourteen or fifteen manuscript volumes of Goodwin in time became confused with the three volumes of official minutes which are now in Dr. Williams's Library. Mitchell and Struthers in their Minutes of the Sessions, op. cit., p.vi., give conclusive evidence showing that there is no connection between the two: (1) Goodwin wrote in octavo; the three vols. in Dr. Williams's Library are in folio. (2) Some sessions are reported when Goodwin is known to have been absent. (3) Thomas Goodwin's son said that his father wrote in "brief." (4) Experts have identified Dr. Williams's volumes as being in the handwriting of Richard Byfield, the official scribe of the Assembly.

⁵³ The "Life" was prefixed to Vol. V of the Works (1704 ed.).

⁵⁴ The implication is that this "Life" was inserted in the most suitable place by the editors. At any rate, the son had 16 years between his father's death and the first publication of the Constitution of Churches, in which to write his "Life" of his illustrious father. There is no reason to suppose that the son had to write the "Life" after the 1696 edition of the Constitution of Churches and before the 1704

edition of vol. V of the Works. In all likelihood, he would have written it soon after his father's death while events were still fresh in his mind, and while the memory of his father was still a strong incentive to do so.

**Part 1. . .Bibliological Differences: God's Word Interpreted
by Prejudiced Exegetes (Chaps. III-V)**

CHAPTER III

THE SCRIPTURES

SECTION A: INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY

The identifying mark of Puritanism was its attitude toward the Bible. It would be a study worth the undertaking to consider in detail the Puritan's use of the Bible, but we can only consider the more important aspects in this limited account;

Many of the various parties connected with or comprising Puritanism agreed on the matter of the inspiration and authority of the Bible and the Presbyterians were not a whit behind the Independents in this. Samuel Rutherford, one of the Scottish Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly, wrote in 1644:

Where grace and weight of Scripture make motion, we walke, in a right line toward God. But where opinion a messenger only sent to spie the land of lies, and truth, usurpeth to conduct us, what marvell then we goe about truth, rather then lodge with Truth.¹

The ministers of London, agreed to this: "...there is a perfect and sufficient rule for church government laid down in the scriptures, which is obligatory upon all."² The pity was (and is) that this rule proved difficult to grasp. If these hopes could have been realized, the Presbyterian-

Independent controversy would never have developed. Such quotations might be multiplied, because the voice of Presbyterianism often sounded like Obadiah Sedgwick's sermon to the House of Commons on January 27th, 1646/7, when he classified as one of the most blasphemous heresies of his day, the doctrine

That the Scriptures are but of an humane invention, a meer shadow, a false History, and ought not to be the foundation of any mans faith, more then the Apocrypha, and other Books, etc.³

There can be little doubt that seventeenth century Presbyterianism held to the divine authority and inspiration of the Bible as the only word of God.

The problems which confronted the two branches of Puritanism which we are discussing, were intensified by the fact that the Independents, no less than their Presbyterian counterparts, also held to the divine authority and inspiration of the Scriptures. Henry Burton asserted, in 1644, that

...of Divinitie, the Rules and Principles whereof, are all of them laid downe in the Scripture, unto which alone all Questions about Faith and Religion are reducible, and finally determinable, as who so denieth this, denieth the faith, and is not to be disputed with, ...⁴

There was no room for discussion, if any would not accept the authority of the Bible. It was the only ground for possible agreement. The Presbyterian Sedgwick (supra) said little which John Goodwin did not echo within a few months:

we know that the righteous God hath said unto the spirit of this most dreadfull abomination, goe forth into the land, prevail, and perswade many; yea it is somewhat more then to be feared, that the cloud arising out of the sea, which is yet little, and but like a mans hand, will in a short time cover the Heavens with blacknesse. For how great is the generation amongst us, who deny the divine authority of the Scriptures.⁵

Thus, we have seen that both parties in the dispute began with similar views of Holy Scripture. There was no debate between them at the Westminster Assembly over the first chapter of the confession of faith and little was changed eleven years later at the Savoy, when the Independents issued their own confession which was only a modification of the Westminster Assembly's.⁶ Thomas Goodwin,

who was present at both assemblies, issued his own articles of faith (in the company of others) in 1654, and the first article mentioned is

That the holy Scripture is that rule of knowing God, and living unto him, which who so doth not believe, but betakes himself to any other way of discovering truth, and the mind of God instead thereof, cannot be saved.⁷

We are therefore justified in placing Thomas Goodwin in the main stream of Puritan scripturists. In the Apologeticall Narration, which he took the lead in penning, the Independent brethren at the Westminster Assembly confess

Our consciences were possessed with that reverence and adoration of the fulnesse of the Scriptures, that there is therein a compleat sufficiencie, as to make the man of God perfect, so also to make the Churches of God perfect...⁸

Although the two sides agreed in the above particulars, they by no means acknowledged their agreement. Robert Baillie accused the Independents of perverting Scripture:

In Preaching, they differ from the Brownists and us, and joyn with the Popish Monks; they will not be tied to a Text of Scripture for the ground of their discourse, but will be at liberty to run out on whatsoever matter they think most fit and expedient for their hearers.⁹

It is difficult to understand this criticism apart from some particular grievance which Baillie might have had against some individual Independent.¹⁰ Certainly, the accusation hardly coincides with what we know of many Independents. Thomas Goodwin had a keen sense of the grammatico-historical context of Scripture and often accused the Presbyterians of taking a text out of its context.¹¹

In spite of this, many still accused the Independents of misusing the Book of God. Clement Walker [?] maintained that "some of them...acknowledge the Scripture, but so far onely as they will serve their turns, to Pharisee themselves, and Publican all the world besides;"¹² In 1641, Thomas Edwards claimed that his book was "fetch out from the Court of Heaven, and from the Records of Holy Scripture."¹³ It is unnecessary to add that all to the contrary had no claim to

derivation from the Eternal Pages.

The subject of translations of scripture troubled many on both sides of the controversy. William Lyford (Presbyterian) wrote that

To believe the Scriptures...whether in the Originalls, or in the English Translation, to be the Word of God, and to containe in them the minde and will of God concerning man's Salvation, is a necessary foundation of Christian Religion¹⁴

This position was also held by Richard Vines (another Presbyterian of the Assembly):

The Scriptures exprest in English are the word of God. The deficiency of exact translation of this or that particular word doth not invalidate the canon or bodie of the Scriptures.¹⁵

It was generally true that all the Puritans admired the English translation, but it was by no means universally agreed as to whether or not inspiration was to be extended to the King James version. George Gillespie, one of the more moderate Presbyterians from Scotland admitted that "...we cannot enough admire the Authors of the New English translation..."¹⁶ But the general consensus of the Westminster Assembly was that "The Old Testament in Hebrew...and the New Testament in Greek...in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them."¹⁷ It is therefore surprising to find so many of the Westminster divines appealing so often to the various versions for their authority.¹⁸ We must conclude that there was not general agreement about this question even though the confession seems to settle the argument.

Some of those outside the Assembly had entirely different views of the matter of translations. John Goodwin, for instance, is quite emphatic:

if by Scriptures be meant, all the letters, syllables, words, phrases, sentences, and periods of speech, expressed in the said books, called Canonically, whether Translated, or in these Originalls (I mean in such, either Hebrew or Greek copies, as are commonly extant, and used amongst us) I know no ground why I should beleieve...that all, and every the said syllables, words, phrases, etc. were in any speciall or extraordinary way given, or appointed by God, to convey

those spirituall truths and mysteries unto the understandings and mindes of men, which he hath been graciously pleased to reveal from heaven, for their salvation.¹⁹

The question of the letter of Scripture vs. the Essence of Scripture²⁰ is to be further discussed in the next section, but we must notice that this great question was not one of the principal differences between the Presbyterians and Independents, for it cut across both party lines.

SECTION B: THE PROBLEM OF INTERPRETATION

We have seen that both sides in the controversy were more or less agreed about the authority and inspiration of scripture. Now we proceed to the first real difference between the Presbyterians and Independents, which was the matter of interpretation of the Word of God.²¹

No one seriously doubts that the seventeenth century produced some of the greatest preachers and exegetes in English history, but we might well question some of their interpretations. We wonder at the New England Puritans' claim to being the New Israel. Our sympathies lie with Roger Williams who denied this as well as their justification of displacing the native Americans on the ground that the Indians were the Amalekites who were to be ruined by God's chosen people.²² Common sense cries out at the New England Elders trying to justify their reluctance to accept tithes on the basis of Revelation 8:8, 9. The mountain burning with fire and cast into the sea supposedly meant the bringing of settled endowments into the church under Constantine.²³ Equally irregular, is Samuel Rutherford's defense of the magistrate's power by appealing to the example of the three Jews being cast into the fiery furnace, a scriptural example of disobedience to the state religion.²⁴

Thomas Goodwin was not backward about offering such questionable exegetical examples either. He affirmed that the rise of Asa in the Old Testament Israelitish history symbolized the rise of the Separatists.²⁵ Nor did he hesitate to use Canticles 8:8, 9 as an illustration of the relationship which should prevail between New Testament "sister" churches.²⁶

Our problem is to determine what different methods, if any, were used by the two parties in this dispute over church government, in the interpretation of scripture. The first item to observe is the place of the "godly synod". Deeply rooted in Puritanism was an innate belief that the truth of God could guard itself from all error.²⁷ When the Presbyterians began to show serious doubts about this, the cleavage between them and the Independents appeared immediately. Samuel Rutherford said, "we aske for the externall meanes" even though "it is true the Scriptures keep themselves from false interpretation."²⁸ The Scottish theologian from St. Andrews goes further and declares that

The sense of Scripture from Synods should be beleived truly to be infallible, though Synods consist of men who are not infallible, as an earthen pitcher doth contain gold and precious Rubies and Saphires in it, though there be no gold in the matter of the pitcher but onely clay.²⁹

This view was much stronger than the Westminster Confession³⁰ and almost substituted an infallible synod for an infallible Pope, which denied the fundamental Reformation principle of individual responsibility to interpret the Scriptures. It was a Presbyterian doctrine of ex cathedra. But the professor continued:

we hold, when lawfull Synods convened in the name of Christ doe determine according to the word of God they are to be heard as Ambassadors who in Christs stead teach us, and what is once true and ratified as the reverend-professours say and never subject to any further examination, and new discussion, so as it must be changed and retracted as false. For this is to subject the very word of God to retraction and change because a Synod did declare and truly determine it in a Ministeriall way to be the word of God.³¹

It is very doubtful whether or not such an extreme position was held by any English Presbyterian of the times. Rutherford probably outreached his own countrymen.

Not all of the Scottish Commissioners in London wanted to go as far as Rutherford. George Gillespie sponsored a more moderate view:

We say that Congregations ought indeed to be subject to Presbyteries and Synods, yet not absolutely, but in the Lord, and in things lawfull, and to this purpose the constitutions of Presbyteries and Synods are to bee examined by the judgement of Christian discretion... so that it ought not to be blindly obeyed³²

Apollonius of Middleburgh believed that the "company of Presbyters... chosen by the multitude of the Church" has all authority delegated from God and is "set over and takes care of the Church, and rules it by spirituall jurisdiction, and decrees made consonant to the Word of God." ³³ Rutherford and Apollonius were closely akin in their views of synodical infallibility.

For a man to rely on others outside himself for the substance of his beliefs was repugnant to the Independent. He asserted, to the contrary, that every

particular person, or Church, ought not to submit their Faith, their Religion, nor the guidance of their manners to an Authority which is subject to errour, but only to the Word of God, which is an infallible Authority.³⁴

Another anonymous and sarcastic writer paraphrased the Independent position in such a way as to ridicule the Presbyterian refusal to tolerate them:

The Independents do instruct the people in a Liberty which they say Christ hath given them, and cry up the Scripture for the only Rule, and that compleat and perfect, and exalt Christ in his prophetical Office, directing all men to a dependance on the Spirit of Christ for deciding Controversies, and resolving Doubts, and by this meanes Ministers and Synods will not have that Authority they have formerly had, when the people shall examine their determinations, by which they ought to be concluded. Therefore Independency is mischievous to the Church.³⁵

Perhaps this unknown champion of Independency had touched the most crucial point

of all the many differences between themselves and their brethren. It was the point of the Holy Spirit's operation in a "godly synod" of faithful men or in individual believers. The Independent position did not logically require synods, because every saint was self-sufficient under God through the indwelling Spirit. But if the Independent's view was strongest at this point, then it was also weakest. It made no allowance for hallucinations of the spirit which were not of the Holy Spirit, a possibility which often plagued the Presbyterian mind.

The next area of disagreement came in the application of logical rules of consequence to the passages of Scripture dealing with polity. Both the Savoy and the Westminster Confession recognized the validity of applying general principles to the letter of scripture.³⁶ Men like Thomas Goodwin were very reluctant to avail themselves of this privilege and kept to the letter. Presbyterians had no such qualms and launched out with vigor into such tumultuous seas. Many of them readily admitted that one could not find their system of Government in the New Testament. "Now the severall sorts of these Assemblies are not particularly determined in Scripture," wrote Gillespie,

but left to be particularly determined by the Church,
conforme [d] to the light of Nature, and to the generall
rules of the Word of God.³⁷

It was not a rare occurrence for Gillespie to throw away the "letter" for the "spirit" of the Word, and then to hide under the cloak of "applying the general rules of scripture". Undoubtedly, it was this method of interpretation which so often brought Thomas Goodwin into collision with Gillespie in the debates at the Westminster Assembly.³⁸ When the scholarly young Scot was asked why his system was not found in the New Testament, he gave three reasons: (1) "because it was not necessary": The "generall rules of the word together with natures light" are "sufficient to direct the Church therin..." (2) "Individua sunt infinita". There are

too many variations to fit each country and time in the world to put all possibilities in the Bible. He complained that "the world had beene filled with volumes thereof..." (3) "Because this constitution of Synods Provinciaall and National, is not universall for all times and places..."³⁹ The last named was particularly obnoxious to the Independents and to Thomas Goodwin.⁴⁰ He saw that it could only lead to indecision and skepticism. No one would ever agree that one time was better than another. Logically, such a view would emasculate all claims of jus divinum. Surprisingly, it did not.

The London ministers,⁴¹ William Prynne,⁴² and Thomas Edwards⁴³ all concur in this matter of applying logical rules to the letter of the Scriptures in order to justify the Presbyterian system according to New Testament standards. All despaired of depending on the letter of Scripture. This is where they ran head on into Thomas Goodwin, the literalist.

SECTION C: THE "ONE SENSE" OF SCRIPTURE

From the Hague, John Dury wrote a letter to Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye, parts of it dated June 24 and July 4, 1642. In this letter he outlined his efforts to promote a peace between the Lutherans and Calvinists. He mentions two of his objectives:

first...a fundamentall confession of faith...and
secondly...a common and infallible rule of interpreting the Text of holy Scripture, by which all Doubts incident to other matters, not fundamentall, may be cleered and decided.⁴⁴

The indefatigable Dury did not seem to realize that the first objective could hardly be reached before the second, and that the second was a phantom not likely ever to be seized. He believed that "this Rule of interpretation should be a meanes to

joyne the more learned sort in one sense and meaning." .⁴⁵ The search for "one sense and meaning" proved the undoing of much that the Puritans hoped to accomplish.

William Twisse put the problem in the form of "A Perplexing Question".

He asked:

If there be two Physicians of equall learning, and of the same intent in curing the sick, that is, alike desirous to cure the disease, and if these Physicians should out of one and the same Book gather, the one that a Fever is cured with wine, and the other, that wine is as bad as poyson to them that have the Fever, how I pray shall we know which of these two to take part withall? A man can gather nothing, but that the remedy for that disease is obscurely expressed in that Book.⁴⁶

Fortunately, Twisse does not stop there, but continues,

God thought it not usefull for us to reveal all things to us, but though all things perhaps be not necessary to be known, yet nevertheless there may be had a certain and infallible way of interpreting, by the help whereof the most, and most necessary Controversies may be decided.⁴⁷

The experience of the Westminster Assembly and of the controversy between the Independents and Presbyterians supports this claim that in major doctrinal matters, it may be possible to find an infallible method of interpretation, but in matters of polity, such an attempt was a total failure.⁴⁸

The tremendous difficulty of discovering the "one sense" of Scripture was shown in many ways during the hectic years of the 1640's.⁴⁹

2. On February 25th, 1645, Thomas Goodwin was called up to preach before the House of Commons. His sermon was taken from Ps. 105:15, and he proceeded to demonstrate that the great interest of states and kingdoms is found in the magistrate's treating the saints with justice and mercy.⁵⁰ Two months later, Simon Ford, a young Presbyterian minister from Puddle-Towne in Dorsetshire, arrived in London to preach his sermon. He used the same text, called his dis-

course by the same name, but disagreed with Goodwin over what the greatest interest of states and kingdoms really was. Ford maintained that this interest was not the common saints...but the ordained ministers of the land. Evidently, he had read Thomas Goodwin's sermon and was determined to refute its implications at the first opportunity. One wonders if he came all the way to London for that express purpose.⁵¹

Such considerations as these drove the Puritans more and more into the blind alley of their mythical "one sense" of Scripture.⁵²

Surprisingly, many who rejected the "letter" for the "spirit" in interpreting Scripture were not on the left wing of Puritanism. Richard Baxter said: "Words are but as the body of Scripture, and the sense the soul."⁵³ And Thomas Hodges (Presbyterian) implied that the Devil was the only one who urges the letter of Scripture.

As the seed of the Serpent the generation of Vipers, Heretickes and seducers have learnt of the Diuel that old Serpent to urge Scripture against Scripture, that is, the letter of Scripture against the true sense, scope and meaning of it. So may the children of Abraham learne of Christ the seed of the Woman to answer Scripture with Scripture, and therefore when they plead and object as the Diuel did, It is written; we may answer or reply as our Saviour did. It is written againe. Math. 4. 6, 7.⁵⁴

But let us not mistake the interpretation of Scripture by the "letter" with a literal interpretation. Most Puritans were literalists to a greater or lesser degree⁵⁵ but not all of them insisted on the "letter" if it was opposed to the true sense, which also could be interpreted literally.

SECTION D: THE WORD OF GOD AT THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY⁵⁶

Perhaps there has never been a Christian council more conscious of the Word of God than the Westminster Assembly. From beginning to end, the

Scriptures permeated their thoughts, their confession, their directory, their catechisms, and their debates. That they were concerned with producing a reasonably priced Bible for the public is indicative of their interest.⁵⁷ And when the First Committee gave in its report on the Thirty Nine articles only twelve days after the Assembly first met (July 12th, 1643), a great debate arose because they had omitted the Scripture proofs.⁵⁸ It was a portent of things to come.

The surprising fact is that the Assembly did not always follow their zeal for the Scriptures with practical action. From the start, it was agreed that "What any man undertakes to prove as necessary, he shall make good out of scripture."⁵⁹ But in the debates this aim was sometimes set aside. Often there was no scripture given in certain documents presented.⁶⁰ The most striking deletion of scriptural proofs concerned the first printing of the Confession of Faith. In December, 1646, or early January, 1647, the finished Confession was printed without any scriptural proofs.⁶¹ The House of Commons had to request that they be inserted.⁶² Some years later, the Independents at Savoy declined to give their scripture proofs because

The Confession being large, and so framed, as to meet with the common errors, if the Scriptures should have been alleadged with any clearness, and by showing where the strength of the proof lieth, it would have required a volume...as did the Reverend Assembly in the same case: ⁶³

So that in spite of their Puritan zeal for the scripture, the Assembly divines sometimes thought it superfluous.

It is interesting to note that Thomas Goodwin included the scripture proofs when he published his articles of Faith in 1654.⁶⁴ Although his is only a very small confession, yet he deemed it important to append them to every single article. This might indicate that he would have done differently if he had had his way at Savoy or at Westminster.⁶⁵

Not only were the Assembly divines keen on proving their assertions from the Word, but they often displayed a marked concern for a true exegesis. They were not out to force interpretations where the text would not allow it. Palmer once urged in debate (December 7th, 1643) that

When Scripture is obscure, the Spirit of God seemeth to teach, that the deductions that may be fetched thence, are very sparingly to be imposed upon men's consciences.⁶⁶

On another occasion (February 10th, 1644/45), Seaman cautioned against relying too much on dictionaries and grammars. Later, he warned against using the Septuagint to the disadvantage of the Hebrew. The latter was to be interpreted by the former, not vice versa.⁶⁷

SECTION E: THOMAS GOODWIN'S USE OF THE BIBLE AT THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY

There was no one at the Westminster Assembly who looked more to the Scripture than Thomas Goodwin. In all his debates he displayed a most remarkable Biblical knowledge. His opponents were often hard put to answer him. Few were his peers in the department of Biblical exegesis, although many were more famous for their Scriptural learning.

Examples of Thomas Goodwin's use of the Bible during the debates are many. For instance, on November 21, 1644 (Session 327), he was the first to inject a scriptural argument into the discussion of marriage.⁶⁸ The other divines had been debating according to logic and propositions only. Goodwin was swayed by nothing but chapter and verse. When the long and involved discussions concerning Church Government were in full process, it was Goodwin who always arrived, first thing in the morning, with a new argument out of the Word of God.⁶⁹ On November 17, 1643, he gave a very lengthy and helpful Greek exegesis of Romans 12.⁷⁰ During

the debates on officers in the Church, he was at his best when he was giving a detailed exegesis of some passage of scripture.

But in spite of his usefulness in debates, especially in conjunction with the meaning of various scriptural passages, Thomas Goodwin was still subject to error. On October 26th, 1643, he was caught in a web of difficulty by John Lightfoot, who had to point out that Goodwin was confused in his understanding of the two Jameses of the New Testament.⁷¹

He was not a good textual critic. It is not correct to say that seventeenth century divines were not concerned with such things, for many of them were. During the debates on the Kingship of Christ over the Church, Goodwin tried to urge Revelation 15:3 as proof of the proposition. The reading of many of the older manuscripts is *Βασιλεὺς τῶν ἁγίων*, but Seaman and Lightfoot objected strenuously to this. They said that the best reading was *αἰώνων* and that it was confirmed by the Syriac.⁷³ As a result of this, the verse was dropped as a proof.⁷⁴

Among the scriptural proofs given in Thomas Goodwin's articles of faith, is another questionable reading. He quotes I John 5:7 as one of the main proofs of the Trinity.⁷⁴ Such carelessness was more excusable in the seventeenth than the twentieth century, but it is evident that Goodwin ran behind some of his contemporaries in the matter of textual criticism.⁷⁵ On another occasion, John 5:4 is quoted⁷⁶ which has very poor textual evidence.

At the Westminster Assembly, however, the part of Thomas Goodwin's exegetical procedure which caused more commotion than any other was his insistence on the literal meaning. Philip Nye and W. Bridge agreed with him in this,⁷⁷ but not Carter, another of the dissenting brethren.

Some Presbyterians, like Palmer, often insisted on a painfully literal interpretation of tiny details,⁷⁸ with views quite similar to Goodwin's. On the other

hand, there were many who resented such hermeneutics and wished to go beyond the letter in some cases. On September 23, 1644, in the midst of the discussion about Matthew 18, and the subordination of synods in appeals, the young Scot, George Gillespie, said that, "If there be hopes of gaining our brother, I may take six or seven before I come to the church, after the two or three."⁷⁹ It was this adding to the express word of scripture which irritated Goodwin and intensified the antipathy of the debates.

One of the most revealing episodes of the Westminster Assembly insofar as Thomas Goodwin is concerned, occurred on February 23, 1644/5. The debate was over the phrase ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ and the Church at Jerusalem. Goodwin, Nye, and Bridge had been insisting on a literal understanding of this phrase which would have obliterated the main Presbyterian argument that the Jerusalem Church was so large that it could not meet in one place and that therefore, there must have been a representative meeting in the eldership. Finally, Lightfoot could stand it no longer and he attacked Goodwin's literalness.

Here I answered Mr. Goodwin: That grant ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ to signify as he would have it, yet he must understand 'secundum analogiam fidei' or 'rationis': as, 'all the men of Sodom met at Lot's door;' this could not be: 'The ark rested on the mountains of Ararat,' that could not be: 'Jephtha was buried in the cities of Gilead', that could not be: ergo to be expounded 'secundum rationem.'³⁰

The question of whether or not reason should be higher than the analogy of faith is beside the point, as far as we are concerned, but it shows that Goodwin's literalness often proved a thorn in the flesh to the divines at the Westminster Assembly.

SECTION F: THE BIBLE AND THOMAS GOODWIN

All the various Biblical languages were at the disposal of this learned Puritan

and he gives readings and exegetical remarks from the Old Testament in Hebrew,⁸¹ from the Septuagint,⁸² and from the Syriac.⁸³ In this, he was far in advance of many of his countrymen and especially the Scots, who were notoriously deficient in Hebrew.⁸⁴

His Greek is sometimes open to question, but according to the times, he was far above average. For instance, he is confident that *καί* in Ephesians 4:11 distinguishes two kinds of officers (i.e. Pastors and Teachers),⁸⁵ but it might be that the word *καί* means "also" instead of "and". In this latter case, the rendering would be "pastors who also teach". Again, he translates *γυναικας* as "deaconesses" in I Timothy 3:11, relying on Grotius.⁸⁶ When he deals with Ephesians 4:14, *ἐν κυβετα ἀνδράσιν* he says that *κυβεία* refers to a certain kind of square built ship. More likely, the word refers to a kind of game of dice (or "cubes").⁸⁷ But even these trivial mistakes (if they be mistakes) are due more to his relying on the wrong commentaries than to grammatical errors. Beza and Cicero led him astray in the last case and Grotius in the former. They need not detract from the man's eminency nor from his advanced Biblical learning.

Ordinarily, Thomas Goodwin functioned according to well-known and generally respected rules of hermeneutics. He says, for instance, that "the right context of Scripture is half the interpretation."⁸⁸ The analogy of faith is recognized: "one place expounds another".⁸⁹ When the problem of "types" is discussed, he shows himself to be a true Puritan:

To us this is an infallible Rule, that where God hath applyed a Type, or any thing out of the Old Testament, to an Institution under the New, we should so far be led by it, as he hath in [t.] his or that particular applyed it; for otherwise the Analogy of those chief Priests, which are called *ἐπισκοποι* Overseers, as the Septuagint rendereth it, Psal.109.8, Acts 1.20., Zech.11.14, 22. would hold for the Order of Bishops, by way of Analogy, as strong as any Argument can be framed from the Analogy of their Courts, to the like Ecclesiastical now.⁹⁰

He saw that the wrong use of Types from the Old Testament could only favor Episcopacy. Therefore, he wished to put iron-clad safety devices on their use. Often, he felt that the Presbyterians were taking so much of their system out of the Old Testament that they were only a hair's width away from playing into the waiting arms of the Prelates.

By far the most distinguishing feature of Thomas Goodwin's hermeneutics was his incessant literalism.⁹¹ Goodwin's rule of literalism was this:

all Texts of Scripture are to be understood literally except they make against other Scriptures, or except the very coherence of the Scripture shew it otherwise ...Indeed, if we put upon allegoricall senses, we may put off any Scripture;⁹²

In another place, Goodwin writes: "Ubi Scriptura non distinguit, nec debemus distinguere."⁹³ We have already seen how his literalism was the occasion for much agony of debate at the Westminster Assembly (supra).

One example of his reliance on the letter concerned the two sacraments of the Lord's Table and of Baptism. He wanted them both to be given to the local church in order to be guarded. Thus, he practised closed communion. But he discovered one instance in the case of Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8) where a person was baptized outside the fellowship of a local church. Therefore, he gave the one sacrament of Communion to the local church, and the other (of Baptism) he gave to the Universal Church.⁹⁴

If he was usually consistent with this principle, we must also point out that he sometimes violated the rule. For instance, he tried to prove the Trinity out of Proverbs 8.⁹⁵ Any such personification of Wisdom so that it symbolized Christ, must be done according to Alexandrian methods of exegesis. Goodwin does not scruple to do it!

Although John Goodwin is often confused with Thomas Goodwin, the two men were entirely different personalities. Both of them were Independents, but the

former of a strange genus. On at least two notable occasions, John accused Thomas of adding to the express word of God and Thomas was never able to answer the charges. The first occurred in a letter sent by John to Thomas in 1639, after the latter had fled to Holland. In this letter, John said that Thomas Goodwin had added to the New Testament in his insistence on a Covenant relation for the institution of local churches.⁹⁶ The second such incident occurred nearly fifteen years later. John accused Thomas of adding to the New Testament by having a part in the instigation of the Triers under Cromwell.⁹⁷ Both of these events will be further discussed, but they are mentioned here to illustrate the fact that Thomas Goodwin was not always consistent in his literalism..

SUMMARY

Both parties of Puritans began with a belief in the absolute authority and divine origin of the Holy Bible, but there were marked differences between Presbyterians and Independents over the matter of interpretation. The former championed the "godly synod" who could supposedly interpret Scripture infallibly. The latter spoke more of individual conscience in all matters of faith and religion, refusing to allow even a godly synod between themselves and God. Presbyterians generally favored the application of logic and reason to the letter of Scripture, whereas Independents tended more to the "letter" than the "spirit". Many Puritans hoped to find the "One Sense" of Holy Writ but this proved illusive to find and only encouraged the growth of theological controversy. The search for an inerrant rule of interpretation proved endless, but many Independents thought that the closest approach to it was through "literalism". Thomas Goodwin was one of the age's outstanding literalists, but he was also no technical scholar. The problem of interpreting the Bible was the really important issue between Presbyterians and Independents.

¹Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries or, A Peaceable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland (London: 1644), "Epistle to the Reader", unpagged.

²Ibid., p.ix (preface, mispaged). This was originally published in 1646. Cf. Rutherford, Due Right..., op. cit., p.131; et William Seigwich, Scripture A

Perfect Rule For Church-Government: Delivered in a Sermon at Margarets Westminster, before sundry of the House of Commons. (London: n.d.). Vide note on the date of this sermon in the Bibliography, section I, "Primary Sources", infra.

³Obadiah Sedgwick, The Nature and Danger of Heresies, Opened in a Sermon Before The Honourable House of Commons, January 27, 1646, at Margarets Westminster, being the day of their solemn Monthly Fast. (London: 1647), p.31. Sedgwick was one of the London ministers at Covent Garden. He also sat in the Westminster Assembly of Divines.

⁴Henry Burton, A Vindication of Churches, commonly called Independent: etc. (London: 1644), p.3.

⁵John Goodwin, op. cit., "Epistle to the Reader", unpagged. It is worth noting that Richard Baxter recommended this book. Vide A Christian Directory: etc. (second edition, London: 1678), p.196, Part III. This is striking because he does not mention anything by Owen or even Twisse on the subject of the inspiration and authority of the Bible. Baxter had a strong prejudice against Owen. His view of justification more nearly paralleled John Goodwin's than any of the orthodox Calvinists. The suspicion persists that this colored his judgment concerning recommended books.

⁶Vide S.W. Carruthers, The Westminster Confession of Faith (Manchester: R. Aikman and Son, 1937); et Albert Peel, The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order 1658 (London: Independent Press, 1939).

⁷Thomas Goodwin et. al., The Principles of Faith, presented by Mr. Tho. Goodwin, Mr. Nye, Sydrach Simson and other Ministers to the Committee of Parliament for Religion (1654), p.1. These principles were translated into Dutch soon after they appeared in England. The title was: De Fondamenten des Geloofs, gepresenteert by Mr. T.G., Mr. Nye, Mr. S. Simpson, en andere ministers, den de Gecommitteerden van't Parlement, ter saecke van religie, etc. (Amsterdam? 1654). This indicates that the Independent Brethren still had some kind of following and reputation in the Netherlands, even though they had returned to England fourteen years before.

⁸Thomas Goodwin et. al., An Apologeticall Narration Humbly Submitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament (London: 1643), p.9.

⁹Robert Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London, 1646), p.118.

¹⁰Vide Robert Baillie, The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, A.M. Principal of the University of Glasgow (ed. by David Laing, 3 vols., Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, 1841), p.97, vol. II. Baillie gives a similar description in reference to the preaching of Philip Nye when the latter went to Scotland to discuss the alliance in August, 1643.

¹¹E.g. Thomas Goodwin, Works (London, 1696), p.370, vol. IV., Of the Constitution Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ. All references to

this volume in subsequent pages refer to this edition unless otherwise indicated.

¹² [Clement Walker], Relations and Observations, Historicall and Politick, upon the Parliament, begun Anno Dom. 1640. Divided into II Books: 1. The Mystery of the two Juntos Presbyterian and Independent. 2. The History of Independency, etc. (1648), p.30, Part I.

¹³ Thomas Edwards, Reasons against the Independent Government of Particular Congregations, etc. (London, 1641), Introduction, unpagged.

¹⁴ William Lyford, The Plain Mans Senses Exercised To Discern both Good and Evil: etc. (London, 1655), p.9. Vide pp.6-65 for a lengthy section on the Scripture and errors concerning it. Lyford was one of the Westminster divines.

¹⁵ Richard Vines, The Authours, Nature, and Danger of Haeresie. Laid open in a Sermon Preached before the Honorable House of Commons at Margarets Westminster, upon Wednesday the Tenth of March 1646. etc (London, 1647), p.68.

¹⁶ George Gillespie, An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland, in the points of Ruling-Elders, and of the Authority of Presbyteries and Synods (Edinburgh, 1641), p.40.

¹⁷ Carruthers, op. cit., p.92, Chap. I: Sect. VIII of the Westminster Confession.

¹⁸ E.g. Thomas Goodwin, vide Works, op. cit., IV, 169, 173, 236, (LXX);, 288, 328 (Syriac). Of course, there is a difference in using these versions as aids to exegesis and in using them as authorities for final appeals. Sometimes, it was difficult to make this distinction with the Puritans.

¹⁹ John Goodwin, Authority, op. cit., pp.13, 14. John Owen, Of the Divine Original, Authority, Self-Evidencing Light, and Power of the Scriptures;... Also, A vindication of the Purity and Integrity of the Hebrew and Greek Texts of the Old and New Testament; etc. (Works, vol. XVI: Oxford, 1659), maintained the contrary viewpoint, but Cappel showed that the Hebrew vowel points were not as ancient as the Hebrew text itself. Vide Conklin, op. cit., p.13. Part of the difficulty regarding John Goodwin's view was a semantic problem. He meant by "Originall" only the extant MSS in either Greek or Hebrew. Ordinarily, we would use the term "Original" to apply to the MSS as they came from the hands of their respective authors, who were led of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, there is no room for the science of textual criticism.

²⁰ Between the Presbyterians and Independents, the conflict over the "letter" and the "spirit" was not the same as between the Quakers and Puritans. In the latter case the concern was a matter of Pneumatology rather than of Bibliology. With the former two parties, it was only a method of arriving at the truth contained in the scriptures whereas, in the case of the latter two, the Quakers refused to be hamstrung by a strict adherence to the Bible alone as a repository of truth. Vide Ralph Paul Bohn, "The Controversy Between Puritans and Quakers to 1660", unpublished thesis presented to the Faculty of Divinity of New College, University of Edinburgh, 1955, p.172ff, Chap. III, "The Doctrine of the Scriptures". The author discusses in this section, the "letter" vs. the "spirit". Also vide Geoffrey

F. Nuttall, "The Quakers and the Puritans", Congregational Quarterly, XVI:3 (July, 1938), pp. 315ff;-----, "Law and Liberty in Puritanism", Congregational Quarterly, XXIX:1 (Jan., 1951), p.19. In many ways, this controversy with the Quakers was easier to resolve than the other. The issues were more subtle and agreement on the authority of the Bible should have produced agreement on polity. A recent discussion of the "letter" vs. the "spirit" is found in J.K.S. Reid, The Authority of Scripture: A Study of the Reformation and Post-Reformation Understanding of the Bible (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1957), p.28, although the author speaks against a backdrop of nineteenth and twentieth century Biblical criticism which, of course, was foreign to seventeenth century Puritan scholars.

²¹Vide Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background (London: Chatto and Windus, 1934), p. 57ff., chap. on Scripture interpretation.

²²Roland H. Bainton, The Travail of Religious Liberty (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), p.209.

²³Richard Mather, Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed, In an Answer of the Elders of the severall Churches in New-England To two and thirty Questions, sent over to them by divers Ministers in England, etc. (London, 1643), p.77.

²⁴Rutherford, Due Right..., op. cit., p.354. For such notions as this, William M. Campbell, in his recent book, The Triumph of Presbyterianism (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1958), p.128, admits that some of the Scottish arguments for Presbytery were Biblically unsound. Some of the Independents' ideas were equally questionable. John Owen even preached that Nimrod was one of the first prelates who "hunted for preferment". Vide his The Duty of Pastors and People distinguished, etc (London: 1644), p.11, mispagged. It should be p.3.

²⁵Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), Of the Constitution..., op. cit., p.362, IV.

²⁶Ibid., p.228.

²⁷Vide Jordan, op. cit., p.127.

²⁸Rutherford, Due Right..., op. cit., p.130.

²⁹Samuel Rutherford, A Free disputation against pretended liberty of conscience, etc., (London, 1649), p.35. (Italics mine).

³⁰Vide Carruthers, Westminster Confession..., op. cit., p.154, Chap. XXXI: Sect. IV.

³¹Rutherford, A Free disputation..., op. cit., p.36.

³²Gillespie, An Assertion..., op. cit., pp.127, 128.

³³Apollonius of Middleburg, A Consideration of Certain Controversies at this time agitated in the Kingdome of England, Concerning the Government of the Church of God. Written at the Command and appointment of the Walachrian Classis. (London: 1645), p.38. (Italics are mine.)

³⁴ Lewis (or Louis) Du Moulin, The Conformity of the Discipline and Government of those who are commonly called Independents to that of the Ancient Primitive Christians (London, 1680), p.8.

³⁵ ----, Certain Additional Reasons To those presented in A Letter By the Ministers of London to the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, 1 Jan. 1645. etc. (London, 1645), p.5.

³⁶ Chap. I: Sect. VI of the Westminster Confession in Carruthers, op. cit., p.91. There was no change in the Savoy.

³⁷ Gillespie, An Assertion..., op. cit., p. 160.

³⁸ Vide e.g. George Gillespie, Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster, p.11 (Feb. 6, 1644).

³⁹ Gillespie, An Assertion..., op. cit., p.163; cf. Rutherford, Due Right op. cit., p.229.

⁴⁰ Vide e.g. Thomas Goodwin Works (1696 ed.), op. cit., p.89.

⁴¹ Jus Divinum..., op. cit., p.225.

⁴² William Prynne, Twelve Considerable Serious Questions touching Church Government, etc. (London, 1644), pp.5, 6.

⁴³ Thomas Edwards, Antapologia: Or a Full Answer to the Apologeticall Narration ect., (London, 1646), pp.59, 60.

⁴⁴ John Dury, Epistolary Discourse... to Tho. Goodwin, Philip Nye, and Sam. Hartlib, 1642-3 (London, 1644), pp.2, 3.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.3.

⁴⁶ William Twisse, The Doubting Conscience Resolved. In Answer to a (pretended) perplexing Question, etc. Wherein is evidently proved, That the holy Scriptures (not the Pope) is the Foundation whereupon the Church is built Or, That a Christian may be infallibly certain of his faith and Religion by the holy Scriptures. (London, 1652), unpagd.

⁴⁷ Loc. cit.; vide also the 1795 reprint of this book entitled The Scriptures Sufficiency to determine all matters of faith (printed in Dumfries), preface, p.iii.

⁴⁸ This point is graphically illustrated in Thomas Goodwin and Jeremiah Whitaker, The Grand Debate Concerning Presbitery and Independency By the Assembly of Divines convened at Westminster by authority of Parliament, etc. (1652). Both parties took the same scripture passages and built their entirely different church polities on them. For the study of the debates over scripture at the Assembly, this book gives more complete treatment than any of the official documents or journals connected with the famous meetings of Westminster divines.

⁴⁹Vide e.g. William Haller, "The Word of God in the Westminster Assembly", Church History, XVIII (December, 1949), (published by the American Society of Church History), p.218.

⁵⁰Thomas Goodwin, The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms, Works (1861 ed., vol. XII), p.31ff.

⁵¹Simon Ford, The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms. The Second Part. A Sermon Preached on a Publike Thanksgiving, on the 12th of May, 1646. at Botolphs Alders-gate: And after (upon the desire of some friends) enlarged at Pauls Church in Coventgarden, on the Lords Day, May 17th. 1646 (London, 1646).

⁵²Vide John Owen, The duty of pastors and people distinguished, etc. (London, 1644), p.43, (also printed in Works, XIX); John Robinson, Works, p.48, vol.I; Basil Willey, op. cit., p.123. The last mentioned gives Lord Herbert's concept of the need for "one sense".

⁵³J.M. Lloyd Thomas (ed.), The Autobiography of Richard Baxter (Everyman edition, London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1931), p.xxli (Introduction).

⁵⁴Thomas Hodges, A Scripture Catechisme, Towards the confutation of Sundry Errours; Some of them of the present times (Oxford: 1658), "The Epistle Dedicatory", unpagcd.

⁵⁵Vide Peter Munz, The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1952), p.30; A.F. Scott-Pearson, Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism 1535-1603 (Cambridge: University Press, 1925), p.418; G.D. Henderson, op. cit., pp.17-20; et Conklin: op. cit., p.10.

⁵⁶An article appeared in the publication of the American Society of Church History entitled "The Word of God in the Westminster Assembly," Church History, XVIII (Dec., 1949) written by William Haller. It was to be expected in view of the title, that such a section as we now propose for this thesis, would be unnecessary. But the author scarcely deals with his announced subject at all. He discusses, rather, many events and sermons outside the Assembly instead of the use of Scripture "in" the Assembly as he professed.

⁵⁷S.W. Carruthers, The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly (The Presbyterian Historical Society of America and The Presbyterian Society of England, 1943, Philadelphia), p.189. One of the commendable things done by Philip Nye, one of the Dissenting Brethren, was that he took the lead in trying to secure a cheap edition of the Bible so that common people could afford one. Vide Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (ed. by A.F. Mitchell and John Struthers, Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874); pp.72,169,184,188. Parliamentary laws for the compulsory ownership of an English Bible were worthless unless the common people could afford it.

⁵⁸John Lightfoot, Works (ed. by John Rogers Pitman, London, 1824), vol XIII containing The Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines: From January 1, 1643, to December 31, 1644, etc., p.5; et A.F. Mitchell, The Westminster Assembly (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1883), p.146.

⁵⁹ Carruthers, Everyday Work..., op. cit., p. 46.

⁶⁰ Mitchell, Westminster Assembly..., op. cit., p. 300.

⁶¹ Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes (3 vols., New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878), p. 757, vol. I.

⁶² Ibid.; vide also Mitchell, Westminster Assembly..., op. cit., p. 367.

⁶³ Albert Peel (ed.), The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order 1658 (Independent Press, 1939), p. 41.

⁶⁴ Thomas Goodwin, et. al., The Principles of Faith..., op. cit.

⁶⁵ In spite of Goodwin's assiduous insistence on scriptural proofs, he was still attacked for omitting them. Christopher Atkinson, a Quaker, issued The Sword of the Lord drawn and furbished against the man of sin. In answer to a paper "The Principles of Faith" by Thomas Goodwin, one Nye, and Sydrach Simpson (1654). This author denied almost every one of Goodwin's tenets and kept insisting that he give scriptural arguments even when every article was weighted down with references.

⁶⁶ Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 75.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 53 (February 11, 1644/5).

⁶⁸ Mitchell and Struthers (eds.), Minutes of the Westminster Assembly, op. cit., p. 7.

⁶⁹ Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 190 (March 1, 1644/5) e.g. Of all the sources of information we have concerning the Westminster Assembly, Lightfoot's Journal is one of the best on the debates about the use of certain scriptures.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 55.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 28. On another occasion, Goodwin confidently proclaimed Paul as the undisputed author of the book of Hebrews... a pronouncement that even Calvin avoided. Vide Goodwin's Of the Constitution, op. cit., p. 217.

⁷² Mitchell, Westminster Assembly..., op. cit., p. 184. Alexander Souter's apparatus would seem to favor αὐτῶν instead of αὐτῶν, because it has the Chester Beatty Papyrus III (p⁴⁷), primary Sinaiticus (A¹), Ebraemi Rescriptus (C), the Latin Vulgate (L¹), the Syriac Philoxenian or Harkleian (S¹), and the Egyptian Sahidic (S¹). Vide Novum Testamentum Graece (Oxonii: E. Typographeo Clarendiano, 1953).

⁷³ Unfortunately, Thomas Goodwin persisted in his laxness. He quotes Rev. 15:3 in support of Christ being the "King of Saints" as distinct from His being "King of Nations". Vide Works, vol. I (1861 ed.), p. 36. The same verse is used in the same manner on p. 77, vol. IV. of the same edition. This latter reference was originally part of his book Christ Set Forth which was first published in 1651, seven years after Lightfoot had called his attention to his error in the Westminster Assembly debates.



⁷⁴Thomas Goodwin, Principles of Faith..., op.cit., p.2. Henry Vane also uses this verse in the same manner in his book, The Retired Mans Meditations..., op.cit., p.2. But it must be pointed out that he was not a trained theologian as was Goodwin. The latter can hardly be excused by the company of Vane. Milton was a better textual critic regarding I Jn. 5:7 than either Goodwin or Vane. He doubted the authenticity of the verse and was familiar with several variant readings. Vide Conklin, op.cit., pp.20, 97n., 35n.

⁷⁵I Jn. 5:7 was often used by Goodwin. Vide Works (1861 ed.), op.cit., IV, 231, 217, 263; VIII, 152, 360.

⁷⁶Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), p.9, vol. IV. op. cit.

⁷⁷Lightfoot, op. cit., p.177.

⁷⁸Mitchell and Struthers, Minutes..., op. cit., p.34.

⁷⁹George Gillespie, Notes on Debates..., op. cit., p.81.

⁸⁰Lightfoot, op.cit., p.179. Vide et cf. Letter of John Goodwin to Thomas Goodwin, where the former attacks the latter's literalness; appended to Thomas Goodwin's Works (1691 ed.), p.40, vol.IV.

⁸¹Vide e.g. Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), p.263, vol.IV., op. cit.

⁸²Vide, supra.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴G.D. Henderson, op.cit., p.18.

⁸⁵Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), op.cit., p.288, IV.

⁸⁶Ibid., p.294.

⁸⁷Ibid., p.266.

⁸⁸Thomas Goodwin, Works (1861 ed.), p.349, vol.V.

⁸⁹Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), op. cit., p.192, IV. Cf. Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London, 1646), p.192.

⁹⁰Goodwin, Works (1896 ed.), op. cit., p.173. Cf. Baillie, op. cit., p.172. It is evident that Baillie agreed with Thomas Goodwin in many of his hermeneutical principles.

⁹¹Vide Horton Davies, The Worship of the Puritans (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1948), p.54.

⁹²A Glimpse of Zion's glory; etc. (London: 1641), Works (1861 ed.), pp.70, 71, 72. It is also cited by Baillie, in the Dissuasive, op. cit., p.86. Vide infra for

a discussion of the authorship of this sermon. Baillie, op. cit., p.86, (cited by).

⁹³ Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), op. cit., p.186.

⁹⁴ Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), op. cit., p.233. This will be discussed latter in more detail.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.241 (mispaged, it should be 243).

⁹⁶ John Goodwin's letter to Thomas Goodwin, op. cit., appended to the Works of the latter (1696 ed.), p.39, vol. IV.

⁹⁷ Vide John Goodwin, ΒΑΣΑΝΙΣΤΑΙ : or the Triers (or Tormenters) Tried and Cast, By the Laws both of God and of Men, etc. (London, 1657), pp.4,5.

CHAPTER IV

THE USE OF EXTERNAL AUTHORITY IN THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

SECTION A: THE APPEAL TO AUTHORS

Martin Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers became one of the high water marks of the Protestant Reformation. Coupled with this teaching was that of the inherent right of private judgment in all religious matters. These two presented a formidable battering ram with which to beat down the stony bulwarks of the ancient Papal fortress built on an authoritarian Church. But a strange dissension had appeared in the ranks of the besieging armies by the middle of the seventeenth century. The priesthood of all believers and the right of private judgment logically meant the eclipsing of any appeal to external authority. If carried out to the extreme, this would have led to a total devaluation of education, and of the use of antiquity or contemporary authors in the interpretation of Scripture.

The tendency to such extremes is ordinarily associated with the Anabaptist emphasis on the Spirit, but we shall see that the tensions connected with this problem were also visible in the Presbyterian-Independent controversy. When

the conflict showed itself on this field of battle, the Puritans were aghast to discover that one of the principle external issues between Protestants and Rome was suddenly an internal problem of preponderating implications.¹

The great principle of an individual's right to interpret scripture and to be immediately responsible to God was voiced by many both inside and outside Puritanism.² However, when the Independents showed signs of carrying the implications of this belief over into matters of church polity, the stage was set for a further act in the violent drama of the 1640's.

Attempts to find an infallible rule for the interpretation of scripture led quite naturally to an investigation of other solutions proposed by divines in similar situations of the past. The search for authors who supported one particular polity or another became intense on both sides of the controversy. In spite of evidence to the contrary, Thomas Edwards, the Presbyterian more famous for his attacks on toleration, tried to quote William Ames in favor of certain elements of Presbyterianism.³ From the pens of two Scottish champions, Gillespie and Rutherford, came an appeal to the arch enemy, Socinus, who supposedly favored their system.⁴ In one of his books, George Gillespie spends a whole chapter attempting to vindicate the "testimony of Ambrose" concerning ruling elders.⁵ Across the Atlantic, John Cotton was busily trying to prove that Cyprian was an Independent.⁶

John Dury's rule for interpreting the scripture infallibly was quite simple. That is why it failed. It was so simple that it could not be applied. He suggested that theological problems "may be decided according to the Analogie of that Faith which is out of all doubt, and according to the cleere sense of the Word regularly analyzed:"⁷ The phrase "regularly analyzed" proved to be the trojan horse which destroyed the city. It opened the door to the use of a multitude of authors to decide questions of interpretation. Dury's scheme could only have produced a new

Babel of confusion.

Nevertheless, it was this premise which underlay most of the Presbyterian exegesis of the day. The charge made by Robert Baillie proved to be true. He admitted that "no Protestants build their faith upon humane testimonies:" but he hastily added that "no men in the world make so small account of antiquity as our Brethren",⁸ i.e. the Independents.

"Novelty" was the usual epithet hurled by the Presbyterians. They complained that no one had ever held such revolutionary ideas concerning the government of the church as did the Independents.⁹ Nor was the subtlety of Edwards lost in the wind, when he attacked toleration by asserting that many of the greatest Puritans of the previous generation would be embarrassed by some of their proteges.¹⁰ It is significant that he mentions Perkins, Sibbes, and Preston, whose influence Goodwin came under at Cambridge. Goodwin published the sermons of the latter two.

Gillespie and Rutherford seemed to have the idea that previous commentators and Fathers could not all be in error. The latter was even more extreme. He held that God's truth was somehow exhausted by innumerable interpretations. The only thing left to do was to weigh the historical evidence.

In spite of these charges, the Independents were not perturbed. They freely admitted that their ideas were revolutionary. They believed that they lived in the last days and that church government was one of the truths God had reserved for such a time as this. Theirs was an eschatological viewpoint which allowed for a progressive unfolding of the truth of God.¹¹

The general lines of difference between Presbyterians and Independents laid down supra must, however, be modified by flexibility. Presbyterians, like Rutherford, could quote authors ad nauseam. Once he quotes sixty-two authors to support a very small point regarding his view of the visible church.¹²

Thomas Edwards espoused the view that in matters of doctrine alone is the scripture authoritative, but

touching the policie and ceremonies used in the Church;
it is another matter, we avouch that the Fathers did not
think themselves bound to give an account of them by the
Scripture¹³

This makes the use of authors the principal ground of authority in matters of polity.

Over against these extremists are others no less Presbyterian. Charles Herle writes:

Readers look now adayes upon long books, as upon long bills, after the Imprimis, and an Item or two glanced at, throwing them by for Executors, to examine at leasure more thoroughly:...(able sooner to weare out a Coblers thumbs to turne the leaves then a Schollers nailes to score the Margens)...there's no better argument of a bad cause, then in much to say a little in it; a man might (possibly) as an easy a rate have blowne the Text with words, and crowded the margin with Authors; but that I like D. Moulins resolution better, ratehr [sic] to bring one argument, then ten Authors to his cause, and (herein) it holds more expecially, where all that which is called Antiquity is una litura, waved utterly, in this one word Humane, and to say truth, not (herein) much amisse, in as much as the substance of the question is, what kind of Church government the Scriptures have left us ? ¹⁴

The author of these words is much nearer to the full Independent position than to the Presbyterian view represented by Rutherford and Edwards (supra). Nor was Herle alone in his repudiation of the authority of human references. The "Captaine in the Presbyterian Army",¹⁵ Dr. John Bastwick, managed to write a book of some six-hundred and sixty-two pages in length without referring to any outside authority save the scriptures.¹⁶

Between the two extremes of total abstinence and ungoverned indulgence in the art of quoting, there were many moderate Presbyterians. Oliver Bowles very ingeniously presented three arguments for the use of authors: (1) It gives historical perspective; (2) History contains valuable lessons; (3) It furnishes an indirect, but

effective means of reproof error.¹⁷ Another of the Westminster divines, William Lyford, wrote very caustically against any who did not value the opinions of others more learned:

we ourselves need polishing by the skill and learning of the others; for they digg deep to search out the hidden Knowledge, they hunt and catch the Venison, which we so readily dresse, and dish out to our Hearers; Let them have the honour of their Gifts and Labours. It is the work of an Age to breed a sound learned man, and none but dung-hill-spirits will undervalue such precious Jewels.¹⁸

Many of the moderate Presbyterians agreed with Lyford and Bowles. They would have confined the use of authors within circumscribed limits, avoiding both the pitfalls of pedanticism and Lyford's "dung-hill-spirits". Richard Baxter expressed their mind when he said,

I Would not dissuade my reader from the perusal of Aquinas, Scotus, Ockam, Arminiensis, Durandus or any such writer, for much good may be gotten from them; but I would perswade him to study and live upon the essential doctrines of Christianity and godliness incomparably above them all!¹⁹

The emphasis of the Independents was different from that of their Presbyterian brethren. A generation before the Long Parliament, John Robinson wrote prophetically that he had

known some, who if they light upon a peremptory author, and bold asserter of things, were ready to be still of the same opinion with the book which they last read, their weaker judgment being overborne, rather by the strength of other men's asseverations, than reasons.²⁰

Many of Robinson's successors were emphatic in their repudiation of everything human pertaining to interpretation. They preferred the internal leading of the Spirit, thinking that the Spirit had no need of the learning of others.

"I have no Libraries beside me," declared John Saltmarsh, "to put into my Margin; neither dare I write in the authority of man, but of God, and not in the words too much which mans wisdom teacheth."²¹ Another Independent requested

of his readers that he "be not compelled to seek the living among the dead, Truth
 ... amongst the presumptions, and infirm suppositions of men; but in the Scriptures
 ... "22 John Cook said that an Independent

thinks nothing more hinders a reformation then taking things upon trust, not supporting authority by solid reason. He wishes that every ingenuous man would disclaim all practises... that are against the law of true reason;... and a ready prostration to Antiquity, preferring old Errours to new discoveries of Truth, being prime causes of all injustice and oppression, as if an Argument from Authority were any proof to a wiser man;23

An interesting suggestion is made by John Owen concerning the use of various authors to interpret scripture. His idea was that too many commentaries and helps can only end at eclipsing "the perfection of the written word."24 This possibility never seemed to bother the Presbyterians whose views of scripture were no less noble than Owen's. Perhaps Owen's suggestion should be taken along with the complete reliance of Left Wing Puritans on the Holy Spirit's interpreting scripture apart from any external helps. Then, the two doctrines of Inspiration of the Word and the indwelling Spirit combined to produce a reluctance to interpret scripture by the doubtful means of man's wisdom.

When the Presbyterians examined the archives of church history and the tomes of contemporary divines, they professed to find there nothing of Independency. They accused their brethren of instigating a polity which was entirely new to the Christian Church and which was diametrically opposed to the practice of most of the reformed churches in the world.

It was against the background of this charge of "novelty" that some Independents finally did resort to the use of authority external to the Bible. To them, it was only a matter of self defense. William Bartlett apologized to his readers for resorting to extended references:

As for the judgements of the most eminent learned, and

godly men which I have here and there, throughout the Treatise produced, I have not done it in the least, to disparage the authority of the Scriptures; for without controversie, the word of God is greater then all the testimonies of men, but only to satisfy such as are weake, and conceive that those of the Congregational way, are singular and contrary to all men, both in their judgment and practise.²⁶

Although there were many who did not wish to eclipse scripture, and who did want to utilize the learning of others, yet the distinction between Presbyterianism and Independency was clearly marked. Many Puritan divines, even the opposite camps, stood very near to one another on this issue but faced in different directions. Their respective emphases were not the same.

SECTION B: THOMAS GOODWIN AND THE USE OF EXTERNAL AUTHORITY

Thomas Goodwin was a moderate Independent. On many issues he stood closer to the Presbyterians than he did to the Independents. When some of his brethren outside the Westminster Assembly cried down every appeal to antiquity, he was not moved into compromising his own education. He had favorite authors²⁶ and he did not hesitate to use them.²⁷ To young ministers, he writes:

The Knowledge of any one man is imperfect, some have skill in one point, and some in another, and so in several ages several truths have been delivered and revealed, Heb.1. 1, πολλὰ μερῶς, by fragments and by pieces, and therefore use the help of all. None of us are as Paul, to whom nothing can be added.²⁸

It is interesting that Goodwin here connects the Independent doctrine of progressive interpretation²⁹ with a willingness to learn from anyone. Logically, the doctrine applied in this fashion, should have led to a renunciation of the other Independent doctrine of the Holy Spirit's interpreting scripture apart from any human means. That such a tension never showed itself illustrates the fact that

many of the Congregational brethren did not realize the full implication of some of their revolutionary ideas.

Regarding the use of commentaries, the twin pillars of seventeenth century Congregationalism, John Owen and Thomas Goodwin, are in perfect agreement. The former maintains that he knows

not a more deplorable mistake in the studies of divines, both preachers and others, then their diversion from an immediate, direct study of the Scriptures themselves unto the studying of commentators, critics, scholiasts, annotators, and like helps, which God in his good providence, making use of the abilities and sometimes the ambitions and ends of men, hath furnished us withal. Not that I condemn the use and study of them, which I wish men were more diligent in, but desire pardon if I mistake, and do only surmise, by the experience of my own folly for many years, that many which seriously study the things of God do yet rather make it their business to inquire after the sense of other men on the Scriptures than to search studiously into them themselves.³⁰

Such a point of view was Puritan to the core. It placed the greatest possible emphasis upon the pages of Holy Writ. Except for the unfortunate attempt to apply this concept to the matter of church polity, many of the quiet waters of Puritanism would have flown on without the slightest ripple.

Some of those who harbored thoughts like these, were careful not to burn all the bridges behind them in their retreat from Papal perversion of the use of authority. They did not want to poison the well from which they continued to drink.

Thomas Goodwin gives this exegesis of Ecclesiastes 12:12:

And further by these, My Son, be admonished: Of making many Books there is no end, and much Study is a weariness of the Flesh. Concerning the Scope and Coherence of this; I observe, 1. That he having commended the Writings of Sacred Scriptures...unto every Man's Study and Search, he gives a Caveat and an Admonition concerning Reading and Studying too many other Books...Exercise thyself in the Study of the Scripture, and what doth best serve to open and explain them. Others...take heed of seeking too inordinately, ...of making or reading many other Books; for there is no end, no satisfaction in them...I observe, he doth not

altogether Condemn reading other Books, or making of them, only preferring others to these, or not counting these most excellent:³¹

Thus, the onetime President of Magdalen College was not so hasty as to derogate any opportunity he might have in the future to make and to sell some of the products of his own busy pen! The issue between the two Puritan parties was not the production of literature but whether this literature should be used as a repository of information and authority concerning church polity. If so, then how far is it authoritative, and how far is it not? Had this simple question been resolved, the resounding clash of Puritan polities might have been somewhat muffled.

SECTION C: THE USE OF AUTHORS IN THOMAS GOODWIN COMPARED WITH GEORGE GILLESPIE

By taking two typical books and counting and comparing references, a simple method of evaluating the Independent with the Presbyterian use of authors can be devised. George Gillespie's book, An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland and Thomas Goodwin's Of the Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ have been selected. The following is a chart showing the result of this analysis:

<u>Goodwin</u>	<u>Gillespie</u>
I. Description of the books:	
408 large pages, small print	262 small pages, small print
II. Total number of references:	
93	272
III. Total number of authors referred to:	
47	120
IV. Number of authors referred to mutually: 24	

<u>Goodwin</u>	<u>Gillespie</u>
V. Goodwin has 23 that Gillespie does not have	Gillespie has 90 that Goodwin does not have
VI. Goodwin's three favorites:	Gillespie's three favorites:
(a) Paul Baines (15 times)	(a) Ambrose (15 times)
(b) Cameron (6 times)	(b) Dr. Field (15 times)
(c) Beza (5 times)	(c) Saravia (15 times)
VII. Goodwin does not quote Gillespie's three favorites at all.	Gillespie uses Goodwin's favorites, but sparingly:
	(a) Baines (2 times)
	(b) Cameron (3 times)
	(c) Beza (5 times)

Although these figures are only tentative and may be subject to errors of counting, yet we may say that Gillespie used references much more freely than did Goodwin. He has three times as many quotations in a book less than half the size of Goodwin's. Rarely, did the two men use the same authors, and when they did, their respective interests were decidedly different. Surprisingly, Thomas Cartwright was only quoted twice by each and John Robinson, once by each, which means that the two greatest champions of the respective sides did not carry the weight which some have thought. As a scholar, Thomas Goodwin was no inferior of George Gillespie, but he did not seem to place the same value upon long lists of references to support his claims as did his young Scottish rival.

SECTION D: THE USE OF AUTHORS AT THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY

An event with far reaching implications is recorded in Lightfoot's Journal for October 17, 1643. On that day, the Westminster Assembly was informed that it was free to use the Archbishop's library and other sequestered libraries of Royalist ministers.³² Nine days later, Lightfoot also records that Parliament

gave a further liberty to use any library that was necessary for the pursuance of their deliberations.³³ These provisions proved most useful to the Assembly, but they also contributed to much indecision and needless debate.

From the start, the Westminster divines were keen on the use of authors. One of the requirements for ordination was a satisfactory answer to the question, "What authors he hath been versed in?"³⁴ During the meetings of the Sub-committee on Accommodation, the Presbyterians requested of the Independents they they "shew out of Scriptures and approved authors what they have learned concerning schisme."³⁵ The Presbyterian brethren specifically mentioned that they only wanted "approved authors". This indicated their point of view. In the debates, themselves, the Scriptures were often lost sight of in the head-long dash after a multitude of concurring commentaries.

Nor were the Presbyterians the only divines who used ~~their~~ library privileges. There is ample evidence that some Westminster Independents went further than many of their brethren outside the Assembly, even to elevate the authority of human writers to the unwitting discredit of the Scriptures. Philip Nye quoted Chillingworth to prove that the Church of England is a true Church.³⁶ Sydrach Simpson refers to William Ames in order to prove a point about appeals.³⁷ William Bridge used Dr. Whitaker and Cajetan.³⁸ Woodcock urged the writer, De Dieu, in one debate.³⁹ Several times, Bridge used Calvin to confute the Presbyterians.⁴⁰ Once, Jeremiah Burroughs quoted Dr. Fulke and the Jesuits "for his side".⁴¹ The one exception to the general rule is Thomas Goodwin who shied away from appeals to authors. On January 4th, 1644, he gave an exposition of Titus 1:5 without once referring to any author outside the Bible. This was in contrast to the heated debate which had preceded him. Nearly every speaker had quoted some expositor in favor of his view.⁴² On only one occasion can we discover an instance where Thomas Goodwin quoted any authors in the debates.⁴³ It is significant that the

author quoted was Thomas Cartwright. This fact is even more striking because Thomas Goodwin probably spoke more often than any other divine at the Westminster Assembly.⁴⁴

In comparison with the Independents, the Presbyterians used innumerable authors during the debates at the Assembly.⁴⁵ Baillie, for instance, wrote to his cousin, William Spang, in 1645, and requested that he encourage L'Empereur to write against the Erastians and to "show out, of the Rabbins, that the Jewish state was divers from their church." The Glasgow preacher believed that "if he would confound him with Hebrew testimonies, it would lay Selden's vanitie."⁴⁶ Thomas Goodwin would never have suggested that any argument could be settled by appealing to such an authority as the Rabbins!

In the light of the many attempts to inject extraneous materials into the debates at the Westminster Assembly, it is not surprising that a certain amount of confusion resulted. In one of the debates, Rutherford remarked that "many writers learned have written accurately of it [i.e. of excommunication], and yet never settled this controversy..."⁴⁷ His view was that the Assembly was wasting its time trying to solve such a question: "Not a Protestant Synod that can be produced that hath determined it on either side..."⁴⁸ The St. Andrews' Professor would have arranged the calendar in such a way as to debate only those problems which had already been solved by some other council or group of divines. No new truth could be expected from the Westminster Assembly. Truth was hidden away in books and confessions and canons. The only task left was to ferret out the facts and weigh the historical evidence. Significantly, Rutherford did not allow his view to discourage him. On January 10, 1644, only three days later, he began to debate excommunication by appealing to certain reformed writers.⁴⁹

Further difficulties arose when some of the authors alleged, proved to be contradictory. On March 13, 1645/6, Coleman tried to establish the validity of

some point of Erastianism by quoting Rutherford's book against Erastianism [i.e. The Divine Right of Church Government].⁵⁰ Often, the Independents attempted to quote Rutherford's books against the Presbyterians and the latter reciprocated by using John Cotton's Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven against the Independents.⁵¹

Consternation developed when Rutherford had to admit in the debate over I Timothy 5: 17, that there "are fourteen or fifteen expositions upon this place."⁵² Such a statement could hardly be expected to eliminate confusion. The professor had a facility for creating more problems than he could solve. Several days later, Gattaker voiced a similar conclusion: "That there were so many divers expositors upon this argues, that this place is not so very plain."⁵³ This was still in the debate on I Timothy 5:17, the proof text for ruling elders. Gattaker's implication was that many interpretations nullified an argument from scripture. If such were the case, then skepticism would have been the inevitable result of the debates at the Westminster Assembly.

Sometimes, the debates became bogged down on disagreements among authors. On January 1, 1644, William Bridge quoted Origen trying to prove that Phoebe was a widow.⁵⁴ Young answered him with a counter argument out of Origen.⁵⁵ This was an important point to be borne in mind when the Presbyterians began accusing the Independents of delaying the discussions for their own peculiar benefits. Actually, a good share of the delays were directly attributed to these interminable appeals to authors whose opinions were more often vetted in the Assembly than the Word of the Scriptures.⁵⁶

Four climactic outbursts are noteworthy in tracing the history of discussion based on appeals to external authority. The first occurred on January 3, 1644. The debate concerning the word *χειροτονια* in ordination had deteriorated into a bibliographical battle over great names. Gattaker finally moved "that we should not be laden with human authorities".⁵⁷ Nothing came of it. The appeals

continued.

The second such outburst is recorded by Lightfoot on February 9th, 1644. William Bridge⁵⁸ quoted Calvin in support of the Independent view of I Corinthians 5:4. Alexander Henderson was so angered that John Calvin should be stolen by the critics of Presbyterianism, that he said, "if they begin to heap up authors, let us do so too, and we shall outvie them."⁵⁹

By February 12, 1644, the debates were still in a morass of confused opinion. "Mr. Whittacre moved very seasonably, that we might leave these metaphysical terms, and fall upon Scripture."⁶⁰ There is a recurring suspicion that the debates in the Westminster Assembly could have been resolved in a few days had Parliament rescinded their order providing for the use of libraries and limited all discussion to the words of Scripture.

Nothing progressive had been done toward ending the turmoil a month later. On March 19, 1644, "Mr. Reynolds moved, That we might fall upon the Scripture, to see whether they would hold out the truth of the proposition or not."⁶¹ This was during the debate on ordination. The Assembly still had not come to any agreement concerning the limits of external authority in the matter of interpreting the Scripture.

The fourth outburst of the "back to the Bible" men occurred on April 3, 1646, three years after the opening session. Lightfoot and others were now defending their Erastianism by the devious means of "heaping up authors". At last Seaman spoke against Lightfoot in this fashion:

For the New Testament, he runs upon the exposition of the Rabbins. I desire him to consider whether this be a safe principle to go upon in exposition of Scripture... The disciples of Christ had a notion about the kingdom of God whence did they learn it but from the ancient Rabbins? Christ takes them off from the tradition of the elders..."⁶²

The warning was not heeded. George Gillespie spoke next and his first words

involved an appeal to Buxtorf against the Erastians.⁶³ Lightfoot persisted. Vines rebuked him five days later: "I desire he would not tell us how he finds in Jewish authours, but what he finds in the Word of God."⁶⁴ One of the most perplexing problems of exegesis had yet to be solved.

We must point out that not one Independent took the lead in any of the "back to the Bible" movements within the Assembly. It may be that there were more of these movements than are recorded in extant sources. Because they did not take the lead in this work, they were not true to their own principles. They were content to see Presbyterians tear up their own well-feathered nest, providing they did it methodically over a long span of time...

SUMMARY

The great reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was sorely tested in the Presbyterian-Independent controversy of the seventeenth century. Presbyterians intended to shatter the "novelty" of Independency by pointing out that the latter had no basis in history. Synodical writers emphasized historical precedent in determining theological controversy; Congregational men emphasized their eschatological concept of new truth being unfolded in these latter times. Moderate Congregationalists such as Thomas Goodwin were willing to quote some authors by way of clarification, but they avoided the extremes of men like Rutherford and Gillespie who quoted interminably as if to settle all disputes. In the Assembly, years of debate were wasted because of an inability to agree on the place and authority of human authors in the interpretation of Scripture.

¹Vide Thomas Wood, English Casuistical Divinity During the Seventeenth Century With Special Reference to Jeremy Taylor (London: SPCK, 1952), p. xvii. This shows how the Anglicans tried to avoid the dilemma of authoritarianism vs. doctrinal anarchy. They hoped to learn from all without owning any as infallible guides.

²For William Chillingworth, vide The Religion of Protestants A Safe Way to Salvation (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846 ed.), p. 463; for Hooper, vide A. F. Mitchell, The Westminster Assembly (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1883), pp. 17, 18; for Lord Herbert of Cherbury, vide Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background

(London: Chatto & Windus, 1934), p.127, who cites Herbert's De Veritate (French ed., 1639, 3rd ed.); on John Milton, vide A Treatise of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, and the best means to Prevent the Growth of Popery (vol. II of A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton etc.: (Amsterdam, 1698), p.807; on William Ames, vide The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the holy Scriptures, and the Interpreters thereof, and brought into Method (London: n.d.), p.152.

³ Thomas Edwards, Reasons against the Independent Government of Particular Congregations: etc. (London, 1641), p.16.

⁴ Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries or, A Peaceable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland (London, 1644), p.33; et George Gillespie, An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1641), p.75.

⁵ Gillespie, op. cit., p.57ff.

⁶ As cited by Robert Baillie, The Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time, Vindicated from the Execptions of Mr. Cotton and Mr. Tombes (London, 1655), p.50.

⁷ John Dury, A Epistolary Discourse Written... to Mr. Tho. Goodwin, et. al. (London, 1644), p.4. (*italics mine*)

⁸ Robert Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London, 1646), p.251.

⁹ Vide Rutherford, Due Right..., op. cit., p.11; Gillespie, An Assertion..., op. cit., p.180; et Charles Herle, The Independency on Scriptures of the Independency of Churches: etc. (London, 1643), p.19.

¹⁰ Thomas Edwards, Gangraena: or A Catalogue and Discovery of many of the Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies and pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of the time...etc. (London, 1646), p.145.

¹¹ Vide infra, on Eschatology and Progressive Interpretation.

¹² Rutherford, Due Right..., op. cit., p.225; cf. G.D. Henderson, Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland (Cambridge: University Press, 1937), p.22. The latter author says that Scottish divines did not have many books and did not produce many learned commentaries. Rutherford was an exception.

¹³ Thomas Edwards, Antapologia; or a Full Answer to the Apologeticall Narration of Mr. Thomas Goodwin, etc. al. (London, 1646), p.60. This is a quotation from Cameron.

¹⁴ Charles Herle, The Independency on Scriptures of the Independency of Churches, etc. (London, 1643), "Dedicatory", unpagued.

15

This is the title which is given to John Bastwick by one of his admirers in the dedicatory of his book. Vide footnote number sixteen, infra.

16

John Bastwick, Independency Examined, Unmasked, and Refuted (London, 1656). This is an extremely prolix and tautological dissertation. There are no chapter headings, no sectional markings, very poor paragraphing, no marginal notes, and fine print.

17

Oliver Bowles, Zeale for Gods House Quickened: or a sermon Preached before the Assembly of Lords, Commons, and Divines, at their solemn Fast, July 7, 1643. In the Abbey Church at Westminster . etc. (London, 1643), "Epistle Dedicatory", unpagued.

18

William Lyford, The Plain mans Senses Exercised To Discern both Good and Evil: etc. (London, 1655), "The Preface to the Christian Reader, both Ministers and People", unpagued. Education of a formal nature was not one of the divisive factors between moderate Presbyterian and the moderate Independent leadership. Both had a vital interest in the two universities and both parties in the Westminster Assembly were well-supplied with academically proven divines. The misunderstanding of some regarding this question has come about through the careless accusations of several Presbyterian apologists who claimed that Independency repudiated university learning. Certainly, the example of Thomas Goodwin in itself is enough to show that these synodical assertions were wrong. It was the Left Wing groups who depreciated human learning and not the Congregationalists of the Center.

19

J. M Lloyd Thomas (ed.), The Autobiography of Richard Baxter (Everyman's Library, London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1931), p.109. Cf. Richard Baxter's A Christian Directory etc. (second edition, London, 1678, p.199, Pt. III: "The chief use of the Fathers is to know Historically what Doctrine was then taught . . . But many of them are very weak and dry." The subject of Richard Baxter's being counted a Presbyterian is discussed in appendix "G".

20

John Robinson, "Essays of Authority and Reason", Works (London: John Snow, 1851), p.57, I.

21

John Saltmarsh, The Opening of Master Prynnes new Book, called A Vindication: etc. (London, 1645), "To the Reader", unpagued.

22

John Goodwin, The Divine Authority of the Scriptures Asserted, etc. (London, 1648), "Epistle Dedicatory", unpagued.

23

John Cook, What the Independents would have, etc. (London, 1647), p.15. Cf. Lewis (or Louis) Du Moulin, The Conformity of the Discipline and Government of those who are commonly called Independents to that of the Ancient Primitive Christians (London, 1680), p.66. This latter author points out that every one of the great figures of Church History had some tinge of heresy, such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, etc.

24

John Owen, The duty of Pastors and People distinguished, etc (London,

1644), p. 7. This book is also in vol. XIX of the Works.

²⁵ William Bartlet, ΙΧΝΟΤΡΑΦΙΑ or a Model of the Primitive Congregational way: etc. (London, 1647), "Epistle Dedicatory", unpagged. Cf. John Milton: "one grain of Scripture is of more efficacy and esteem than whole volumes of human testimonies," as cited in Arthur Barker, Milton and the Puritan Dilemma 1641-1660 (The University of Toronto Press, 1942), p.50. Milton's consistency on this subject has been questioned by Harris Fletcher in his Milton's Rabbinical Readings, who champions the view that Milton derived much of his theology from Rabbinical literature. George Newton Conklin, Biblical Criticism and Heresy in Milton (New York: Kings Crown Press, Columbia University, 1949), takes issue with Fletcher in his chapter IV, pp.52-66, entitled, "Rabbinical Exegesis." Conklin believes that Milton derived his theology entirely from the Bible: "The Holy Scriptures, not theologians determine doctrine," (p.79), and when the Puritan quotes a Rabbi, it is only "to embellish an argument" and never a source of the argument (p.64).

²⁶ Vide Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), p.xviii, V.

²⁷ Ibid., p.xxx. Cf. John Brown, Puritan Preaching in England (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900), p.107.

²⁸ Thomas Goodwin, Works (1861 ed.), p.247, IV.

²⁹ Vide infra.

³⁰ John Owen, Vindiciae Evangelicae, preface, as cited by James Moffatt, The Golden Book of John Owen (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), p.148.

³¹ Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.). p.321, IV, The italics are mine.

³² John Lightfoot, Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines: etc. (vol. XIII, Works, ed. by John Rogers Pitman, London: 1824), p.21.

³³ Ibid., p.29 (Oct. 26, 1643).

³⁴ Ibid., p.50 (Nov.13, 1643). Cf. S.W. Carruthers, The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly (Philadelphia: published by the Presbyterian Historical Societies of America and England, 1943), p.156.

³⁵ Thomas Goodwin et Jeremiah Whitaker, The Grand Debate Concerning Presbitery and Independency By the Assembly of Divines convened at Westminster by authority of Parliament, etc. (1652), p.74, Italics mine. The copy of this book in the library at New College, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, is not ordered correctly in the binding. The title page of the "papers for Accommodation" is found out of order several pages before it should occur.

³⁶ Vide George Gillespie, Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster, etc. (ed. by David Meek, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd. 1846), p.54 (April 18, 1644).

³⁷ A.F. Mitchell et John Struthers (eds.), Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines etc. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), p.54, Feb. 11, 1644/5, Session 379.

³⁸ Lightfoot, op. cit., p.312 (September 17, 1644) for Whitaker et p. 160 (February 16, 1644/5).

³⁹ Ibid., p. 183 (Feb. 29, 1644/5).

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.92 (Dec. 28, 1643) et p.140 (Feb. 9, 1644/5).

⁴¹ Ibid., p.142 (Feb. 9, 1644/5). ⁴² Ibid., p.103 (Jan. 4, 1644/5).

⁴³ Ibid., p.276 (May 23, 1644).

⁴⁴ Vide infra, appendix "C", for a tally of Westminster debates.

⁴⁵ John Lightfoot records some of these lengthy appeals to various authors in more detail than does any other extant source: Journal, op. cit., pp. 31, 34, 63, 65, 66, 68, 76, 78, 82, 85, 87, 88, 94, 145, 153, 154, 195, 220, 223, 231, 236, 269, 270, 275, 276, 284, 318. Thus, the first year of the Westminster Assembly had been spent in wrangling over a multitude of authors, rather than in debating the points as contained in the Scriptures. This was to prove a fatal weakness.

⁴⁶ David Laing (ed.), The Letters and Journals of Baillie A.M., Principal of the University of Glasgow MDCXXVII-MDCLXII (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, 3 vols., 1841), p.277, II. Selden was the Erastian champion. According to Conklin, op. cit., p.16, L'Empereur was a great Talmudic scholar, Professor of Hebrew at Leyden, who died in 1648. He was not the equal of John Lightfoot, but published his Talmudis Babylonici Codex Middoth in 1630 in both Latin and Hebrew, and the Clavis Talmudica in 1634.

⁴⁷ Mitchell and Struthers, Minutes of the Westminster Assembly, op. cit., p.31 (Jan. 7, 1644/5, Sess.355).

⁴⁸ Loc. cit. We shall notice that the Scottish commissioners at the Assembly had very distinct ideas about how the debates should be ordered on the calendar. They were willing to allow precedent to reign supreme and to give no place to any debates if previous history had not solved the problems...already. Neither were they to debate anything contrary to the example of the Reformed Churches, according to the Scots.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.35 (Sess.358).

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.197 (Sess.603).

⁵¹ Vide George Gillespie, Notes of Debates..., op. cit., p.85 (Oct. 2, 1644); Lightfoot's Journal, op. cit., p.156 (Feb. 14, 1644), when Philips unsuccessfully tried to use Gillespie's book against the Presbyterians and was accused of mis-quoting by the author himself; et p.169 (Feb. 21, 1644), Lightfoot's Journal, when Nye quoted Rutherford's book uncomplimentarily and was prohibited when Alexander Henderson "cried out that he spake like Sanballat..." and "Mr Sedgwick

wished that he might be excluded out of the Assembly." Many of the angriest recriminations were hatched in the heat generated by quoting various authors in controversial contexts.

⁵²Lightfoot, op. cit., p.63 (Nov. 23, 1643).

⁵³Ibid., p. 74 (Dec. 7, 1643).

⁵⁴Ibid., p.97.

⁵⁵Ibid., p.98.

⁵⁶When Young quoted Cyprian, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, and Epiphanius on Matthew 18, he was answered at some length by Selden, who doubted the validity of his references to Cyprian and Origen. Vide Lightfoot, op. cit., p.168 (Feb. 21, 1644). This is the kind of thing which consumed much of the sederunt's time.

⁵⁷Ibid., p.101 (Jan. 3, 1644).

⁵⁸Lightfoot has confused the names of two men, "Bridges" and Bridge". He often refers to William Bridge, the Independent, as "Bridges" (e.g. pp.140,159). No man by the name of "Bridges" sat in the Assembly, although such a man was discussed there on several occasions. Vide Minutes..., op. cit., p.150 (Sess. 519, Oct. 17, 1645); p.152 (Sess.522, Oct. 24, 1645).

⁵⁹Lightfoot, op. cit., p.140 (Feb. 9, 1644) Cf. Carruthers, op. cit., (foot-note number 34), p.46. Carruthers's wording is chronologically confusing in this debate. It was not Burroughs who prompted this outburst by Henderson. It was Bridge's attempt to bring Calvin into the discussion on the side of the Independents. Burroughs had Dr. Fulke and the Jesuit, Aretius "for his side" (vide supra, p.20) sometime after Henderson's angry explosion. It was not the Jesuits whom Henderson feared, but Calvin's authority must not be sequestered by any save the Presbyterians. They cried Burroughs down "for that we are not to be swayed by commentators but by the word of the scriptures." Vide Lightfoot Journal op. cit., for Feb. 9, 1644 et Carruthers, op. cit., p.46. That the Presbyterians did not follow their own advice is readily apparent.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 147.

⁶¹Ibid., p.225.

⁶²Mitchell and Struthers, Minutes..., op. cit., p.441 (Sess.614).

⁶³Ibid., p. 442.

⁶⁴Ibid., p.442 (Sess.617, April 8, 1646).

CHAPTER V

THE REFORMED CHURCHES AND INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

SECTION A: THE APOLOGETICALL NARRATION

John Calvin had been in his grave seventy-nine years, when the Westminster Assembly first met in 1643. Nevertheless, the influence and prestige of the illustrious reformer and many of his contemporaries were widely felt in the England of 1640-1660.

The shadow of the reformers and the reformed churches fell across many of the debates in the Assembly. Many Puritans were keenly aware of the "example of the best reformed churches" abroad in the matter of church government. The Solemn League and Covenant specifically mentioned that the existing polity in these churches abroad was to be the exemplar of the government established in England. But when the curtain rose on the Presbyterian-Independent drama, it was soon discovered that the places of these reformed churches and of the original reformers themselves, were not agreed upon by the respective disputants.

Early in 1644, the Independent brethren in the Assembly published their famed

Apologeticall Narration petitioning Parliament for a limited toleration. for themselves and their brethren who could not join in the Presbyterian system. It was now apparent that Presbyterianism was to be imposed upon England and that the debates of the Westminster divines were proceeding with inexorable logic towards the exclusion of all but Presbyterianism.

This document was immediately attacked from all sides. For many months, the candles of a hundred authors must have burned into the small hours of the morning, judging by the learned and violent refutations which soon appeared. Of all the charges against it, one of the most frequently heard concerned the reformed churches. According to the Presbyterians, the Apologists had slandered their brethren beyond the sea and had denigrated the memory of the first reformers.

Thomas Edwards wrote that the Apologeticall Narration casts "aspertions on ... the Reformed Churches"¹ and he defended the first reformers against the audacious five who had suggested that "the Calvinian Reformed Churches of the first reformation from out of Popery, ... stand in need of a further reformation themselves."² The theme of reformed churches was a recurring feature of Edward's defense.^{2a} Indeed, Edwards's first charge against the Independents concerned the reformed churches,³ because they spoke "by way of derogation, and depression of all the Reformed Churches differing from them".⁴ He said that the first reformers excelled the apologists "in piety, learning, suffering, yeers".⁵

the Reformers in the Reformed Churches of Geneva, Scotland, etc. upon many reasons.... were like to looke more impartially, ... and without prejudice upon the word of Christ, then you;⁶

Alexander Forbes,⁷ Adam Steuart,⁸ and John Dury⁹ all agreed that one of the most reprehensible features of the Apologeticall Narration was that it spoke ill of the Reformed Churches. Robert Baillie wrote to his cousin, Spang, on February 18, 1644, and complained that the Narration "lends too bald wypes to all the

Reformed churches, as imperfite yet in their reformation while their new modell be embraced... "9a Nearly every orthodox Presbyterian defender seized upon the Independent contention that the churches of the Reformation needed further reformation.

In their much maligned Narration, they professed agreement with the reformed churches in many elements of public worship,¹⁰ but confidently asserted that they

were not engaged by Education or otherwise to any other of the Reformed Churches; and al though we consulted with reverence what they held forth both in their writings and practice, yet we could not but suppose that they might not see into all things about worship and government, their intentions being most spent (as also of our first reformers in England) upon the Reformation in Doctrine in which they had a most happy hand¹¹

They alleged that the great defect in the reformation left by Calvin et. al. was "practical godlinesse"¹² caused by allowing saved and unsaved into the churches.¹³ The early reformers were not infallible. They "left us unreformed as touching the outward forme both of worship and Church government."¹⁴ The Apologists affirmed that England had been left unreformed for eighty years longer than sister nations on the continent and that God had "reserved and provided some better thing for this Nation when it should come to be reformed."¹⁵ Just as the sixteenth century reformation was primarily concerned with doctrine, so now the reformation of the reformation was concerned with government and worship.

The intensity of the storm raised abroad by the Apologetical Narration can be calculated by the many refutations which various reformed churches soon produced. On March 10th, 1644, Baillie wrote thanking his cousin, Spang, for the letter to the Assembly from the Walcheren Classis with its "long and sharpe censure of the Apologetick Narration".¹⁶ This was the first of the reformed churches' attacks on the Independents' petition. Again, Baillie writes that "Mr.

Forbes, in Delft, has sent us over, in writt, a very prettie peice against the Apologetick. I like it very well, I wish it were in print."¹⁷ Lightfoot records that on April 29th, 1644, a letter arrived in the Westminster Assembly from the reformed churches in Zeeland and that it had the "same dislike of the Apologetic narration" as the letter from Walachria.¹⁸

In the Assembly, the Presbyterians had been much embarrassed by the Narration. On March 6th, 1644, a debate arose over the letter from Walachria. The Presbyterians wanted to publish something absolving themselves from any part in the Apology,¹⁹ not wishing the reformed churches to connect them in any way with the sentiments contained in it.

SECTION B: THOMAS GOODWIN, THE REFORMERS, AND THE REFORMED CHURCHES

The former President of Magdalen believed that God intended to recover purity of doctrine and worship in the same manner in which it had been lost. As anti-Christ had gradually perverted God's truth over a thousand years of time, so it pleased God to restore gradually that which was lost.²⁰

Men at first knew but a little, their hearts were only set against images and popery, they knew but a few pieces of the truth; but Wickliffe and John Huss went further. In Luther's time they knew justification by faith, and then popery fell down about Luther's ears, and he said, if they would grant that he would go on further; but when God had unreaved all the tiles, that popery was ready to be pulled down, then Calvin comes in, and more was revealed.²¹

It was therefore no insult to the reformers to insist upon a further reformation than theirs. Goodwin believed that they had gone as far as God intended. Other work had been left for Calvin's successors.

That Calvin was never meant to be the object of obloquy is apparent by the

way Goodwin speaks in his favor. In fact, Goodwin often referred to Calvin's ecclesiastical establishment in Geneva as being worthy of imitation.²²

As seen above, the Apologists did not alienate their system from reformed churches abroad. They specifically mentioned several kindred practices in worship. They professed to have consulted with authors of reformed literature. And they hoped to have fellowship with them in the common faith which both practiced.

It has often been alleged that the Independents counted all reformed churches to be false churches because they conceived them to be deficient in government. Nothing could be further from the truth. Thomas Goodwin says:

I know nothing tendeth more to the peaceable reformation amongst us, than to break down this partition wall; for there is nothing provokes more than this doth, to deny such churches to be true churches of Christ.²³

Instead of violence, Thomas Goodwin cautioned patience as the best way of persuasion. He was not invidious, thinking that calumny could best win the reformed churches to a new system of polity after its having been established for eighty years.

I know that Jesus Christ hath given his people light in matters of this nature by degrees. Thousands of good souls that have been bred up and born in our assemblies, and enjoy the ordinances of God, and have done it comfortably, cannot suddenly take in other principles; you must wait upon Christ to do it.

In this case men are not to be wrought off by falsehoods, God hath no need of them. No, rather, till men do take in light, you should give them all that is comfortable in the condition they are in; we should acknowledge every good thing in every man, to every church, in every thing, and that is a way to work upon men, and to prevail with them;²⁴

He was willing to acknowledge the customs of the reformed churches and to accept any that were true and consonant with the Word of God. But he steadfastly refused to credit infallibility to their practices.

The customs of Churches is now much urged in the World to bind others to them, because the Apostles refer'd to them; but the argument fails and differs in this, which is not considered, that the Custom of Churches then were apostolical; and such Customs in such Churches, so directed infallibly, and Recorded then when the Apostles were present, we may safely account Obligatory but not the Customs meerly Humane.²⁵

Section C: THE REFORMED CHURCHES AND THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY

A concept of ecumenicalism permeated most of the deliberations of the Westminster Assembly. This was at the root of its concern for the "best reformed churches". It also shows that the Westminster divines had unconsciously uncovered one of the most perplexing problems of the twentieth century ecumenical movement. How far can the peculiarities or heritage of different churches be used as a basis for unity and wholeness? Or how can the divergences of various Christian churches be reduced to the lowest common denominator? Inherent in these questions was the appeal to the Reformed Churches as an example to which the Presbyterians aspired and which Independents refused. The Independents at the Assembly were in favor of creating a church system based entirely on the Word of God. The Presbyterians contended that they had an example of such a system in the Reformed Churches, and especially in Scotland. Some of the Presbyterians refused to discuss the validity of their claims and thus only contributed to the disagreement.

In the Assembly, the Independents did not have long to wait in order to see which way the wind was blowing in regard to the Reformed Churches. In the debate over the office of ruling elder, Lazarus Seaman offered this as a rule of hermen-
eutics: "That exposition is to be embraced, which agrees with the words, and with the sense of the most reformed churches."²⁶ Many times a speaker attempted to prove a point by simply saying that it was thus and so in the churches abroad.²⁷

By the end of the summer, 1644, the war had not gone well for Parliament. The Assembly discussed possible reasons for this on September ninth. During the debate, Alexander Henderson made a most revealing statement. He declared that they were wasting their time debating the things which were "acknowledged by all the Continental Churches." They should accept these without debate and proceed to discuss other matters.²⁸ Such a procedure was most repugnant to the Independents whose convictions were that the Continental Churches required further reformation and were not jure divino.

The ecumenical nature of the Westminster Assembly is evidenced by the extensive correspondence with churches in other lands. After it began to deliberate, one of the first transactions was to send a letter to other Reformed Churches abroad requesting help in the great work on which they were embarking: "The way and manner of your owning us we leave to yourselves," they wrote.²⁹ From subsequent events, it would seem that the Scots would have been much more solicitous had they penned the letter after their own fashion. The Assembly wrote many similar letters.³⁰ Dury got information of the reformed churches abroad in answer to a request from Alexander Henderson. In a letter to Thomas Young, Herbert Palmer, and Humphrey Chambers, (all members of the Assembly) Dury volunteered to secure a list of the various precepts of church government practiced by the reformed churches in Holland. His offer was for the purpose of expediting the deliberations in the Assembly.³¹ Lightfoot records that the Assembly sent several letters abroad when it was discovered that some merchants were traveling into Transylvania, Sweden, etc.³² From Baillie's letters, we can discern that one of the Presbyterians' principal hopes was that these reformed churches would speak out unanimously against the Independents.³³

Unfortunately, the Assembly's correspondence did not always produce the results intended. Gillespie records that on March 13, 1644, word reached the

Assembly of a letter sent to the Reformed Church in Paris which caused them considerable difficulty with the Roman Catholic authorities there.³⁴ On April 11, 1644, an answer came from the church in Hessa and it favored Episcopacy! This was such a blow to Henderson that he suggested that the Assembly's letter must have been sent to the wrong church!³⁵

From Walachria, came a reply which was received March 4, 1644.³⁶ It contained a critique of the Independents' Apologeticall Narration, but it embarrassed the Presbyterians, because they had not absolved themselves from any connection with the odious document of the Dissenting Brethren.³⁷ Furthermore, this letter had some very irritating material which was unfavorable to Scottish Presbyterianism.³⁸

One notable fulfillment of Presbyterian aspiration was the letter from Zeeland. It arrived on April 29, 1644, expressing the "same dislike of the Apologetic narration" as the letter ^{from} Walachria.³⁹

Another redeeming event for the Presbyterian efforts was the presentation to the Assembly of Apollonius's book called Consideratio Quarundam Controversiarum ... It was a refutation of the Independents and Erastians. This occurred on December 4, 1644, and was presented by Mr. Calendrine, who was pastor of the Dutch congregation in London.⁴⁰ The Classis of Walachria dedicated it to the Westminster Assembly and the author considered that his literary efforts were in payment for English assistance against the Arminians, a generation earlier at the Synod of Dort.⁴¹

For any to urge the example of the Reformed Churches as an unquestioned authority, often raised the temperature of the cold Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster Abbey. In the discussions on baptism and the recipients of the rite, Wilson voiced a view which was very close to that of the Independents, although he was a Presbyterian. Gillespie's chronicle says

he [i.e. Wilson] thinks the Reformed churches, in some things, may be more reformed, and that the

last will not be the worst. ⁴²

Nor was Thomas Goodwin silent when the Presbyterians tried to add the phrase "best reformed churches" to the statement on excommunication. He cried out that "this puts the renoun upon the Reformed Churches, which the Scripture doth not upon any Churches in the world..." ⁴³

The Assembly, however, could criticize a reformer if they thought he was wrong. On April 22, 1647, a committee of divines from the Assembly reported to Parliament that a new translation of some of Luther's works should not be published, because there were "very many passages contrary to... gravity and modesty..." ⁴⁴ One wonders if John Calvin could ever have suffered a similar fate. Once, George Gillespie, in a debate with Philip Nye, ⁴⁵ almost admitted that the Reformed Churches in Holland were not of a "right order". In some respects, therefore, the Presbyterians were discreet in their handling of the reformers and the Reformed Churches. On the whole, however, their judgment was inclined to favor the Calvinian Churches. It was very rare that anything critical of the Continental Churches or of their founding fathers was voiced in the Westminster Assembly. Their authority and prestige were only questioned by Independents.

SECTION D: ROBERT BAILLIE AND THE REFORMED CHURCHES

There were few more inveterate letter writers than Robert Baillie, the Scottish Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly and Principal of Glasgow University. He took little part in the debates, allowing his fellow-countrymen to engage in that work. George Gillespie and Samuel Rutherford were always in the heat of discussion. Baillie's importance in the Westminster sederunt lies in another area. Perhaps more than any other, he persistently endeavored to stir up the Reformed Churches abroad to help the Presbyterian cause in England.

Through a series of letters to influential persons at home and abroad, we can see quite clearly how a Presbyterian of the times valued the example of sister churches in neighboring lands.⁴⁶

Baillie eagerly sought aid from abroad but was often disappointed. There were very few occasions when events moved as the Presbyterians hoped. Fewer and fewer successes were recorded as time passed. The reasons for this are manifold. First, the Presbyterians had overestimated the extent of agreement between the Scottish and Continental Reformed Churches; and underestimated the agreement of Independency with many of the same churches.⁴⁷ Secondly, the Independents did a rather effective job of bringing their own propaganda to bear in strategic places. Along with this last point, is an indisputable fact that some of the reformed divines were very nearly Independents, especially Voetius, Vossius and Rivett.⁴⁸

SUMMARY

The place and authority of the other reformed churches beyond the sea was not agreed upon by the Presbyterians and Independents. The former wished to use the example of their foreign brethren as a powerful beacon light in their own search for the polity of the Bible; the latter wished to excel the reformed brethren...even to criticize them if they came not up to the Scriptural rule in their reformation of the reformation. The Apologeticall Narration clearly set forth the Congregational position of denial of any degree of infallibility to other reformed churches and to the reformers themselves and thus many of the Presbyterian attacks on the Independent manifesto centered on this point. Synodical men felt that they should defend the honor and integrity of the reformation fathers and of the churches they founded against the innovations of these impudent Apologists.

Actually, the Independent attitude toward the reformers was one of honor. They universally admired their great predecessors, but they wanted leave to try even those great spirits by the Word. Calvin and his contemporaries did not claim to have complete truth revealed to them and Presbyterians were wrong in making all the statements of the early reformers ex cathedra and "incontestible". Congregational men held that the reformers' memory should not be used to prevent new truth from being received from God's Holy Writ. Thomas Goodwin revered Calvin and acknowledged other reformed churches to be true churches but believed that reformation out of popery must proceed by degrees.

Synodical men would imitate their sister churches in their reformation of discipline; Congregational men would go beyond their sister churches. This fundamental disagreement was often mooted in the Westminster Assembly debates, where Robert Baillie was busy with his behind the scenes correspondence trying to crush Independency through the "example of the best reformed churches". His frustration is a study in itself and it appears that Independency had wider support abroad than is usually recognized.

¹Thomas Edwards, Antapologia; Or a Full Answer to the Apologeticall Narration of Mr. Goodwin, et. al., (London, 1646), p.7.

²Thomas Goodwin, et. al., An Apologeticall Narration Humbly Submitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament etc. (London, 1643), p.22.

^{2a}Vide Antapologia, op. cit., pp.16, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26f., 31, 35, 50, 51, 52, 53f., 64, 65, 71, 72-76, 80-89, 164f., 173, 223. Cf. Thomas Edwards, Reasons against the Independant Government of Particular Congregations: etc. (London, 1641), p.36. The author wished to refuse Independents a toleration because they were contrary "to all reformed churches".

³Edwards, Antapologia, op. cit., p.2.

⁴Loc. cit.

⁵Ibid., pp.26, 27.

⁶Ibid., p.24.

⁷[Alexander Forbes], An Anatomy of Independency, or A Brief Commentary, and Moderate Discourse upon the Apologeticall Narration etc., (London, 1644), p.11f.

⁸[Adam Steuart], Some Observations and Annotations Upon the Apologeticall Narration etc., (London, 1643), p.12f.

⁹John Dury, A Epistolary Discourse Written by Mr. John Dury to Mr. Tho. Goodwin, et. al. (London, 1644), p.17.

^{9a}Baillie, Letters, op. cit., p.129, 130.

¹⁰Thomas Goodwin, Narration, op. cit., p.8.

¹¹Ibid., p.4. ¹²Loc. cit. ¹³Vide infra on membership controversy.

¹⁴Narration, op. cit., p.22.

¹⁵Ibid., p.23.

¹⁶Baillie, Letters, op. cit., p.143, II. Cf. George Gillespie, Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and Other Commissioners at Westminster. February, 1644, to January, 1645. (ed. by David Meek, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846), p.33. Gillespie recorded that the letter from Walachria arrived on March 4th, 1644, and that it was against the Apologeticall Narration.

¹⁷Baillie, Letters op.cit., p.181 (to William Spang, 1644, undated), II.

¹⁸John Rogers Pitman (ed.), The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot, D.D., Master of Catherine Hall, Cambridge (London, 1824), vol. XIII containing the Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines: From January 1, 1643, to December 31, 1644, etc.,

¹⁹Ibid., p.199. Cf. ibid., p.245, for further debate on the question of a Westminster Assembly answer to the Narration.

²⁰Goodwin's gradual recovery theory of purity paralleled his progressive interpretation theory of hermeneutics. Vide infra.

²¹Thomas Goodwin, Works (1861 ed.), p.528, V., Three sermons on Hebrews 1:1, 2. Cf. A Discourse of the Glory of the Gospel, p.290, 291, IV.

²²E.g. Thomas Goodwin, Of the Constitution, etc., op. cit., Works (1696 ed.), pp. 198, 217, IV. On another occasion, Goodwin even quotes Calvin in order to prove a limited toleration. Vide ibid., p.400.

²³Thomas Goodwin, Works (1861), p.558, I., An Exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

²⁴Ibid., pp.558, 559.

²⁵Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), op. cit., p.25.

²⁶Lightfoot, Journal, op. cit., p.65 (Nov.24, 1643).

²⁷E.g. De la March appealed to them for reading the Word publicly, vide Lightfoot, op. cit., p.39 (Nov.1, 1643); Lord Warriston used the example of the reformed churches in the debate on I. Cor.V, in relation to public censures, vide p.145, ibid. (Feb.12, 1644); et George Gillespie cited several reformed writers to prove the limited power of the people in a church. Vide p.56, ibid. (May 1, 1644).

²⁸Discussed in S.W.Carruthers, The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly, op. cit., p.75.

²⁹As cited in a History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines and Biographical Sketches of its most Conspicuous Members (Philadelphia: published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1841), p.58.

³⁰E.g. a letter in Latin to Bishop Comenius of the Bohemian Brethren, who was a friend of Hartlib and John Milton, but not of the Scots. Vide A.F.Mitchell, The Westminster Assembly (London: James Nisbet & Co., MDCCCLXXXIII), p.286.

³¹G.H.Turnbull, Hartlib, Dury, and Comenius (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947), p.244.

³²Lightfoot, op. cit., p.235 (April 2, 1644). ³³Vide infra on Baillie

³⁴George Gillespie, Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster. February, 1644 to January, 1645. (ed. by David Meek, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846), p.39.

³⁵ ibid., p.49. ³⁶ ibid., p.80.

³⁷ Lightfoot, op. cit., p.199, in a March 6, 1644 debate.

³⁸ Vide infra.

³⁹ Lightfoot, op. cit., p.254; et Gillespie, Notes, op. cit., p.56. The latter tells us that the Walachria letter promised a more complete refutation of the Narration to be sent at a more convenient time.

⁴⁰ Lightfoot, op. cit., p.339.

⁴¹ Apollonius of Middleburgh, Consideratio Quarundam Controversiarum ad Regimen Ecclesiae Dei Spectantium, quae in Angliae Regno hodie Agitantur, English edition (London, 1645), "The epistle to the synod at London", unpagged.

⁴² Gillespie, Notes, op. cit., p.90 (Oct. 10, 1644).

⁴³ Alexander F. Hendersonn et John Struthers (eds.), Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines etc. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), p.43 (Sess.369, Jan. 27, 1644/5).

⁴⁴ ibid., p.353 (Sess.830).

⁴⁵ Gillespie, Notes, op. cit., p.49 (April 12, 1644).

⁴⁶ vide Baillie's Journals, op., cit., pp.115,128,143,144,181,153,164,165,169, 170,174,179,180,181,197,202,205,218,227,239,240,252,253,254,288,311,371,375,378, II.

⁴⁷ Dutch scholarship has often been overlooked in the evaluation of seventeenth-century Independency. In the light of Baillie's correspondence and evidence of there being many similarities between reformed worship and congregationalism, it is interesting that so many Dutch historians have written of the Independents: D. Deddens, "Het Kerkrecht Van De Congregationalisten In De 17 Eeuw." [a thesis dealing with Congregational polity in the Netherlands of the 1630's] ; D. Nauta, De Nederlandsche Gereformeerden En Het Independentisme In De Zeventiende Eeuw (Amsterdam; H.J. Paris, 1926), [a book on Apollonius and John Norton, vide supra] ; Rudolph Boon, Het Problem Der Christelyke Gemeenschap (Amsterdam: 1951), [a book on the origin and development of the Congregational churches in Massachusetts] ; et Marius Bowman, Voetius Over Het Gezag Der Synoden (Amsterdam: S.J.P. Bakker, 1937).

⁴⁸ vide Douglas Nobbs, Theocracy and Toleration, on the proximity of Voetius and Rivett to the Independents. Nobbs even suggests that Independent theories were "the major influence in the development of Voetius's own theory." Vide p. 172ff.

**Part 2....Eschatological Differences: God's Word Interpreted in the
Light of the "Last Times" (Chaps. VI-VIII)**

CHAPTER VI

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS AND AN ESCHATOLOGICO-DISPENSATIONAL EXEGESIS

In a very real sense, the Presbyterian-Independent controversy of the seventeenth century was an attempt to define the relation between the Old and New Testaments. The reformers had focused attention on the Scriptures instead of an authoritarian church, but the Puritan legatees of the reformation began to ask a further question that Calvin had neglected to answer.

The problem in the seventeenth century was not one of Biblical authority. The question was, what part of the Scriptures can be used for polity in the Church?

Puritans have too often been accused of harboring an "Old Testament Spirit." The Accusation generally stems from their intolerant attitude toward Christians of different persuasions from themselves and from an insistence on defining the Magistrate's duties out of the Old Testament economy.¹ Most writers have concurred in attributing seventeenth century intolerance to an inadequate view of what the Old Testament has to say about judicial punishments.² The problem of the Old Testament in relation to toleration is not our immediate concern, however. Of

more importance to the Presbyterian-Independent controversy is the matter of church government and where the ground of it is to be established.

The Westminster Assembly ascribed inspiration to both Old and New Testaments,³ but unfortunately, the Puritan fathers saw no need to define the applicational limits of each part of the Bible (if indeed there were any such limits). Nevertheless, moderate Puritans were in perfect agreement in the broad terms of authority:

- Q. Then the Old and New Testament be all one for substance?
 A. They are so, Christ is the substance of both; and they are but severall waies of setting down the Covenant of Grace; the one teaching to believe in Christ that was to come; the other shewing more clearly all things fulfilled in Christ now come.⁴

The division between Presbyterians and Independents occurred when matters of polity entered the arena, not over the authority of the Old Testament for Christians. Most would have agreed with Lyford that:

The Scriptures of the Old Testament are still of Divine Authority to the Churches of Christ under the Gospell, to try, judge and determine, in matters of Faith and Duty.⁵

There is no evidence that the Independents at the Westminster Assembly objected to the revision of the Thirty Nine Articles⁶ (concerning the authority of the Old Testament for Christians under grace), and it is evident that the Independents at the Assembly were no more antinomian than their Presbyterian brethren.⁷ John Lightfoot records that a petition against the antinomians was brought to the Westminster Assembly on August 7th, 1643, and it is significant that no Independent voice was raised against it.⁸ The Independents at Westminster displayed no tendency toward antinomianism.⁹ Again, on January 8th, 1644, another report was made to the Assembly by Walker, who "spoke very plainly, that he had heard this week, one member of one of the churches that came out of Holland maintain Antinomianism most strongly and stoutly."¹⁰ The pastor's name was not mentioned and it is presumed that it is not one of the Apologists, for they did not object to this accusation. Furthermore, it was not said that the minister was at fault, but only

one of his members. Whatever might be said of other Independents, a charge of Antinomianism cannot be laid at the door of the Congregational brethren at the Westminster Assembly.

SECTION B: INCONSISTENCIES CONCERNING THE RELATION OF OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS AMONGST THE PRESBYTERIANS

Isolated individuals from the Presbyterian ranks insisted on an exclusively New Testament polity but the synodical brethren in general favored an appeal to the Old Testament for much of their polity. They had a keen sense of the unity of Scripture and they felt that too much dispensationalism eclipsed that unity.¹¹ William Twisse warned that "although in the New Testament a great light be risen, yet must we not think that in the Old Testament there was a meer blindness."¹² Antinomians did not heed such words and were lost in a maze of tiny distinctions concerning moral law, civil law, ceremonial law, and confusions regarding the parts eternally binding and the parts dispensationally applied. Roger Williams was accused by Stephen Marshall of invalidating the Old Testament by his insistence on the separation of church and state.¹³

Most Presbyterians stigmatized Independency as contrary to the New Testament¹⁴ although George Gillespie once admitted that there may have been a few Independent Churches in Apostolical times.¹⁵ The churches established by Paul and others were set forth as exemplars for seventeenth century Presbyterian churches.¹⁶

In spite of the professed aims of the Presbyterian apologists in desiring a New Testament polity, they were unattainable. Inconsistencies, such as the following, thwarted the attempt:

- (1) The first inconsistency was the "development theory" of Presbyterian govern-

ment. George Gillespie, for instance, admits that the New Testament knew nothing of a system of parish churches such as existed in seventeenth century England. These are a later development based on exigency, not a literal interpretation of the words of Scripture.¹⁷ The young Scottish minister insisted that much of the Presbyterian hierarchy of synods was unnecessary in New Testament times, because the Church was only in its infancy.¹⁸ A view such as this, made a transition book out of the Book of Acts, and invalidated the Epistles as authority for a New Testament Church.

William Prynne and Samuel Rutherford admitted that the New Testament knew nothing of a National Church, but maintained that it was lawful to have one since the Church was then only in "her primitive infant condition."¹⁹ The Independent arguments against the institution of a National Church must have been felt by these two Presbyterian stalwarts when they had to make such an admission.

And the St. Andrews's professor even went so far as to say that "the Christian Church that now is, cannot be of that same essential frame with the Apostolick Churches..."²⁰

(2) The second premise of the Presbyterians which stymied their quest for a New Testament Church was that the so-called church of Old Testament Israel was the same as the Christian Church. The full Puritan position was voiced by Stephen Marshall on December 30th, 1646, when he preached before Parliament addressing them as "you that are the Heads of our Tribes."²¹ Seventeenth century England was pictured as a reincarnated Jewish theocracy. "Our brethren," said Samuel Rutherford, "widely mistake a supposed difference which they devise betwixt the Jewish and Christian Church..."²² He continued,

Those Churches be of the same nature, frame, and essential Constitution, which agree in the same essentials, and differ only in accidents; but such are the Church of the Jews, and the Christian Churches.²³

And Robert Baillie wrote that "...The Church in the dayes of Moses and the

Prophets, was one and the same with the Church of our dayes."24

Two generations before our controversy reached its zenith, Thomas Cartwright had accused Whitgift of making the Jews different from Christians: "your words seem to give suspicion of a difference between the Jewes and us, what is that?"25 To many Puritans, nothing was more sacrilegious than to deny this premise!

Debates among the divines at Westminster often centered on the question of whether or not Israel was identical with the Christian Church. Coleman appealed to the "church of the Jews" in order to prove that a meeting of officers was called a "church" in the debate on Matthew 18.26 Rutherford had to admit, to his chagrin, that "there was not such a thing as a Christian Church when Christ uttered.... XVI Matthew".27 The hectic events connected with the feud between the Erastian Parliament and the Westminster Assembly over the jus divinum claims of church government gave rise to one of the most interesting speeches ever recorded in the meetings of the divines. Sir Benjamin Rudyard, member of Parliament, instructed the Assembly:

The matter you are now about, the jus divinum, is of a formidable and tremendous nature. It will be expected you should answer by clear, practical, and express Scriptures; not by far-fetched arguments which are commonly told before you come to the matter...I have heard much spoken of 'the pattern in the mount' so express....I could never find in the New Testament such a pattern.28

By this warning, Parliament was serving notice on the Assembly that its answer to the nine queries of jus divinum were to be answered from the New Testament and not from the Old Testament. The Erastian lawyers saw very clearly that Presbytery was based on the presupposition that "Israel equals Church".29

(3) The third tendency which contributed to the failure of the Presbyterians to secure a New Testament polity was seen in their using proof texts out of the Old Testament to prove their so-called New Testament platform. Many Presbyterian writers began with an Old Testament proof of Presbyterian government.30

There were few parts of the Presbyterian polity which were not grounded in the Old Testament by some writer or other. Robert Baillie attempted to disprove separation by appealing to the example of the "Jewish Church" which allowed no other to be tolerated.³¹ The London ministers quoted Haggai and Zechariah when they petitioned Parliament for the ordinance of excommunication to be given into their hands.³² And Richard Baxter spoke in favor of unregenerate church membership by pointing out that Cain was in the first church of Adam; Ham was a member of Noah's church; and Esau in Isaac's.³³

Few, if any, writers of the time used the Old Testament more than did George Gillespie to prove matters of polity. He endeavored to show that a "church" in the Old Testament was often a representative meeting as in Ex.12:3, 21.³⁴ He asserted that Laban's flocks were "called one flock" (Genesis 30:36) and therefore many churches can make one presbytery.³⁵ The subordination of synods was shown from the ancient "Jewish Church".³⁶ Appealing to the Old Testament was criticized by the Independents, but Gillespie answered that they "...doe when they please, reason from the formes of the Jewish Church, and yet they will not permit us to reason in like manner."³⁷ We shall see that Gillespie had hit the Achilles heel of the Independents' case; his criticism was certainly just.

Those who objected to Presbyterian predilections for the Old Testament were usually the Erastians from the Parliament, who sat in the Westminster Assembly. Benjamin Rudyard cautioned during the debate on ruling elders that "it would prove but a weak ground to build our eldership upon the Jewish."³⁸ The next day Lord Say put forth a similar view:

the seeking of ground for a ruling elder out of the Jewish church would be a loss of labour; for that the church and state were so mixed, as that it cannot any way pattern evangelic churches; ³⁹

If these counsels had been heeded, the first argument of Presbyterian apologists would have been eliminated.

Within Presbyterian ranks there sometimes appeared a note of dubiety concerning Old Testament proofs, but these were very few. Some Presbyterians objected to the inclusion of Proverbs 29:18 as a proof of a preaching elder in the New Testament church,⁴⁰ but it passed anyway. While professing to desire a New Testament polity, the Presbyterians actually quoted so many Old Testament texts that they could not possibly have called their system exclusively Christian. It involved many Jewish features.

(4) The fourth reason why the Presbyterian polity was not exclusively a New Testament government, was that their concept of the ministry had many Old Testament connections. We shall only note here that the basic presupposition concerning the elder was that he was equal to the Old Testament priest.⁴¹ Though in all fairness, it must be admitted that some Presbyterians at the Westminster Assembly questioned the equating of Old Testament Levite with New Testament presbyter. On Nov. 6, 1643, Reynor first voiced such doubts.⁴² Palmer later voiced similar objections,⁴³ but these were of the minority opinion.

Thus, although the Presbyterians wished to have a New Testament polity, their practices compromised their hopes. Since the Bible was a unity, they saw no particular reason to try to pigeon hole any part of it. Lacking any basic dispensational application of Scripture, the resulting polity had a distinctly Old Testament flavor. Whether their rivals (who also claimed to have a New Testament polity) succeeded where Presbyterians failed, now remains to be seen.

SECTION C: INDEPENDENTS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT POLITY

The problem which confronted Puritanism was how to maintain the authority of the unified Scriptures of both Old and New Testaments and yet interpret passages dealing with polity in a dispensational pattern. Presbyterians no less than In-

dependents attempted to accomplish this, but we have already seen how the former failed. We proceed to show that Independents, though presenting greater promise of solving this problem, also failed and were perhaps guilty of greater inconsistencies.

John Owen's viewpoint is typical of seventeenth century Independency:

The Lights which God maketh, are sufficient to rule the seasons for which they are ordained; as, in creating of the world, God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; so in the erection of the new world of his Church, he set two great lights, the lesser light of the old Testament, to guide the night, the darke space of time under the law, and the greater light of the new Testament, to rule the glorious day of the Gospel, and these two lights do sufficiently enlighten every man that commeth into this new world:⁴⁴

All Independents would not have allowed as much light in the Old Testament, as Owen did. Some of them were more peremptory:

we finde all kinds of signes and ceremonies in Gods service under the Old Testament, though ordained by God himselfe, to be utterly abolished by Christ, and forbidden to Christians under the New Testament: and much more all such as are of humane invention: all which are of that nature, as the Apostle calls them, the Yoke of Bondage, to such as are intangled therein; exhorting all Christians to stand fast in the libertie wherewith Christ hath made us free.⁴⁵

The Independent view of the relation between Old and New Testaments often resembled a scheme of progressive revelation. "The mystery of the Gospel was manifested generally and more darkly in the Old Testament".⁴⁶ Many Puritans were keenly interested in the problem.⁴⁷ Belief in progressive interpretation lent itself readily to a dispensational application of Old and New Testaments, but few Presbyterians would have disagreed with any of the above quotations; the difficulty is yet to be seen.

Part of this difficulty emerged when the Independents began to denigrate the so-called Church of the Jews. The moderate, Henry Burton, wrote:

The Temple was seven yeares in building, first hewing squaring, then erecting stone after stone, timber after

timber, each in his proper place, here was no variation of the frame and forme of the temple all this while, but the worke went up day by day, till it came to perfection, according to the patterne in writing given to David by the Spirit. Even so, while the Spirituall Temple is framing the daily goings up of it by order after order and rule after rule, is no variation but a graduall rending to perfection, till all be finished; as we now see the whole frame of Church-government for all true Evangelicall Churches so compleated in the New Testament ⁴⁸

The Independent doctrine of progressive interpretation is often similar to the Presbyterian concept of the growth of church government from the simple to the more complex structure. The distinction lies in the fact that the former stopped with the New Testament; the latter continued beyond the New Testament into the present. John Cotton agreed with Burton in that "Under the Old Testament it (i.e. the Church) was in its infancy, but it is comparatively come forth of its nonage, and grown up to a riper age." ⁴⁹ Most Independent writers agreed that the New Testament presented the only valid platform of Church government for a Christian community. ⁵⁰

Not only was the New Testament the ground of church polity, but seventeenth century Congregationalists were quite certain (equally as certain as their Presbyterian counterparts) that their own polity was according to the New Testament example. "The whole New Testament is both an expresse and ample witnesse on our side," asserted Burton. ⁵¹ In the Apologetical Narration, the brethren had defined their principles: "First, the supreme rule without us, was the Primitive patterne and example of the churches erected by the Apostles." ⁵² "The New Testament" was the "sacred pillar of fire to guide us," they said. Edwards seized on this and asked:

why is the old Testament forgotten by you, and not so much as mentioned? What, is the old Testament no patterne, nor example to you in Church-worship and Government, nor is there nothing recorded there any part of the sacred pillar of fire to guide you by? Consider whether in this, you follow not too much the example of some Hereticks and erroneous spirits, who will have nothing to do with the Old Testament, in the points they hold: This is the way of the Anabaptists, and of the Antinomians, both of old and at

this day, and I am sorry such men as you... should
so farre forget your selves, as to contenance such
persons so farre.⁵³

Du Moulin⁵⁴ was equally certain that the Congregational Way was the New Testament Church bedecked in seventeenth century dress.

Since it was said that Independency was contrary to Presbytery, and Independency was the New Testament Church, it followed that Presbyterian churches were not New Testament centered. Congregationalists were as sure of this as their rivals were sure of the opposite assertion. "Their way of constituting this present Presbytery," wrote John Saltmarsh of the Presbyterians, "is without precept or example for such a Way in the whole New Testament."⁵⁵ Thomas Hooker was equally emphatic:

There is no Presbyteriall Church (i.e. A Church made
up of Elders of many Congregations appointed Classickwise,
to rule all those Congregations) in the New Testament.⁵⁶

And Henry Burton charged that "...your Presbyteriall government hath neither best, nor any sufficient warrant, as wee judge, in the New Testament, no nor any warrant at all in Gods word."⁵⁷ Each group of Puritans held the other to be contrary to the platform of government in the New Testament, and their own conformable to it.

To the Presbyterian biblical scholar, Israel and the Christian Church were the same entity. This was feverishly denied by Independents who wished to distinguish between the two. Many years before the Westminster Assembly met, the Independent, Henry Jacob confessed:

I desired to distinguish cleerly betweene the Jewish Church,
and the Christian; which verily differ not in Accidents alone,
but in kind of government and in essentiall constitution...from
hence hath arisen no small occasion of grievous errors.⁵⁸

This observation proved to be prophetic of the 1640's when the issue between the polities of the two Testaments exploded into the intense controversy before us. The relation of Israel to the Christian Church caused as much trouble as any other

single aspect of Biblical exegesis.

Burton also denied that Israel equals Christian Church:

no such model is left in the New Testament, as was given to Moses and David in the Old; which consisted altogether of externall things, being shadows of the spirituall now under the Gospell, the pattern whereof was Christ.⁵⁹

Old Testament ties were a definite hindrance to a New Testament church, said the Independents.

Others too, were interested in the problem. The future Vice-chancellor of Oxford University, wrote in 1644:

Concerning the ancient Patriarchs; from these, some who would have Judaisme, to be but an intercision of christianity derive the pedigree of christians, affirming the difference between us & them, to be solely in the name & not the thing it self: Of this thus much at least is true, that the Law of Commandments, contained in Ordinances did much more diversifie the Administration of the Covenant, before, and after Christ, then those plaine moralities, where-with in their dayes it was cloathed: where the assertion is dificient, Antiquity hath given its authors sanctuary from farther pursuit. their practice then, where it cleer, can be no president for Christians;⁶⁰

Ten years after the Westminster Assembly, at the Savoy, Independents reworded the Westminster Confession and it is significant that they omitted the reference to the "people of Israel" being a "Church under age".⁶¹ Congregationalists had begun to realize that most of the difficulties over polity centered on the economy of Israel in relation to the Christian Church. The pity was that they did not see the issue clearly enough to act consistently.

Just as the Presbyterians were guilty of inconsistency in their search after a New Testament polity, so the Independents (who earnestly sought after a dispensational emphasis of some sort) were not blameless. Roger Williams and Robert Baillie both accused the New England Independents of creating "a strange modell of a Church and Commonwealth after the Mosaicall and Jewish patterne" which "wakens Moses from his unknown grave, and denies Jesus yet to have seen the

earth".⁶² Presbyterians were correct to criticize John Cotton in such a manner, because he had professed to have a New Testament church, yet often used Old Testament texts to expound his so-called New Testament polity.⁶³

One of the most flagrant violations of Independent principles is attributed to Louis du Moulin, who was not really an Independent, himself, but who professed to admire them more than any other group. He set out to prove that "the Congregational way has been practised in all Ages of the World."⁶⁴ He attempted to trace the growth and practice of Independency over a span of four thousand years, through Noah's family, Job, Abraham, Joshua, Samuel, and the seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal. All these Old Testament examples were Independent churches, declared the Frenchman.⁶⁵ Few English Independents (if any) ever embarked on so ambitious a task. And if they had, they would have done violence to their New Testament polity.⁶⁶

As we have seen, the Presbyterians found difficulty in proving their National Church scheme from the New Testament. Independents found a similar difficulty in proving their church covenants from New Testament ground.⁶⁷ Congregational churches required their members to subscribe to a covenant as a qualification for membership. Samuel Rutherford said that they could not show any New Testament ground for the practice,⁶⁸ but it is difficult to see how a Presbyterian could disprove anything from New Testament principles because he admitted that the Church had progressed to a more complex state from Apostolical times.

In the case of Thomas Goodwin, we have an Independent who evidenced quite clearly his own confusion as to the relation between Old and New Testaments in matters of polity. We proceed now to discuss his view.

SECTION D: THOMAS GOODWIN AND THE NEW TESTAMENT PLATFORM FOR CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Like most Puritans, Thomas Goodwin professed to find his church polity within the covers of the New Testament:

There are in the Books of the New Testament written by the Apostles, manifold particular directions and notes, purposely and professedly written to direct the Government of Churches, and ordering the Worship of them.⁶⁹

He pointedly omits any mention of the Old Testament here, trying to lay the groundwork of a dispensational approach to matters of Church polity. He says in another place:

Through Christ might speak in the Language of the Old Testament, it is not necessary that his meaning should be, that the Churches in the New Testament, should be formed according as the Old were; but the contrary. Our Saviour Christ had said before in Matt.16.18. 'I will build my Church;' and as he speaks of New Keyes that are to be given, so by that he prepares their minds to a perswasion, that he would have a New Church Distinct from the former.⁷⁰

The relation between the Old and New Testaments was really one of a contrast between Moses and Christ, between the Jewish theocracy and the Christian Church although both may be called a "Church".⁷¹

God hath so advanced the State of the New Testament above that of the Old; that as the Glory of the Second Temple, exceeded the First; so doth the Glory of the Saints now in these assemblies, excell all former. Every Believer is a Priest now.⁷²

To Thomas Goodwin, the glory of the New Testament Church consisted in the priesthood of all believers. "Let them come with all their Arguments out of the Old Testament," exults Goodwin, "I will but only Preach Jesus Christ, and say, What say you to Jesus Christ?"⁷³

Presbyterians, declared the leader of the dissenting brethren, rely too much on the Old Testament for their church government.⁷⁴ Their polity is definitely not of the New Testament.⁷⁵ If we rely on the Old Testament for polity, "it would as well serve for the erecting of Episcopal Government."⁷⁶ Only Congregational churches are conformable to New Testament patterns.⁷⁷ Thomas Goodwin wanted to get back "to the Primitive picture drawn in the Stories of the New Testament, and in the Rules and Commands in the

the Epistles."78

Regarding the four inconsistencies of Presbyterian practice in using the Old Testament, Thomas Goodwin had these criticisms. First, he questioned development of polity from simple to complex forms. William Prynne and others were answered with this statement:

It lies upon those that affirm it to prove that the endowing single congregations at first with an intire power was an act of necessity, and not voluntary, and as it should stand in all ages.79

Again, Goodwin writes:

If Nature at first do beget a perfect Child, with all the parts, it may indeed grow in Stature; but all the Natural parts it hath when a Man, it hath when a Child; and though it may grow in Stature, it doth not grow in perfection, nor is defective of any of its Natural powers, when a Child, ...80

Secondly, Thomas Goodwin stood close to the Presbyterian position regarding Israel's relation to the Christian Church. Though making a distinction between Old and New Testament economies he was not always clear regarding Israel. When arguing in favor of a toleration for Congregationalists, he speaks as Stephen Marshall had spoken:

that which I principally consider and urge in the case, ... is this, That God, in his gracious providence had so disposed of this nick and juncture of time that all of the ten tribes that would, had liberty to go to Jerusalem to worship by the permission of their King who was over them;81

England was likened to the divided Old Testament Kingdom of Judah and Israel. The terminology paralleled many Presbyterian sermons of the time.

Thirdly, Old Testament proof texts were used as extensively by Thomas Goodwin as by any Presbyterian apologist. The inconsistency of the practice destroyed his professed reliance on New Testament ground for government. He quotes Jeremiah 3:16 as applying to churches under the Gospel;82 Canticles 8:8,9 supposedly speaks

of the relation of New Testament sister churches;⁸³ he uses passages in Exodus to apply to New Testament churches;⁸⁴ Isaiah 4:5 means New Testament particular churches after the Congregational standard;⁸⁵ "Jerusalem was the Type of our Assemblies";⁸⁶ the Lord's supper ought to be observed each week, because "in the Old Testament all ordinances . . . had a fixed Time by Institution."⁸⁷ And in order to justify separation from the Church of England's ordinances in going to Holland, he quotes several Old Testament examples.⁸⁸ The method of exegesis used was a system of typology which often transgressed the rules of hermeneutics which he had imposed upon himself.

I shall be mindful of That Rule, which in the Application of Types, we are ever to follow, that no Types are to be applied to any thing under the New Testament, but by a special warrant from the Holy Ghost, so applying it in some place of the New Testament, or in some Prophecy of the times of the Gospel in the Old Testament.⁸⁹

All the Old Testament was used by Goodwin and applied spiritually as types but not (supposedly) for a ground of New Testament Church polity.⁹⁰ A looseness of usage crept into his practice, however, which often obscured his professed distinction between Old and New Testaments dispensationally.⁹¹ Whether he intended to use the Old Testament as illustrative material for New Testament truth or whether he inadvertently meant it as legitimate proof for his system of government is often difficult to determine.

The fourth inconsistency of Presbyterian apologists involved the superimposition of Old Testament prerogatives onto New Testament concepts of the Christian ministry. Especially did we note their equation of Levitical priest with Christian elder. Although criticizing Francis Johnson (an early Independent minister of the sixteenth century) for trying to make "the New to be conformed to the Analogy of the Old, and so to make a Pastor in a Congregational Church to be as a High Priest",⁹² yet Goodwin breaks down his own distinction by quoting Isaiah 66:21

'I will take of them for Priests and for Levites, '

it implies that there should be these two ranks and sorts of Officers in the New Testament, answerable to those two in the Old, for ordinary Officers, as indeed there are, viz. Bishops and Deacons.⁹³

He also insisted on an obligatory covenant for church membership.⁹⁴ John Goodwin asked how he could justify this from the New Testament and Thomas Goodwin answered by referring to the Covenant in Mount Horeb!⁹⁵

SUMMARY

The controversy between Presbyterians and Independents was more or less an attempt to define succinctly the relationship between Old and New Testaments in matters pertaining to church government.

Both Puritan parties accepted the Old Testament and the New as inspired of God and authoritative. But Presbyterians had a keener sense of the unity of Scripture (inherited from Calvin) and refused to eclipse that unity by any dispensational application. Independents, on the other hand, emphasized the differences between Moses and Christ, setting out to define a revolutionary principle of dispensational application of divine truth, especially in reference to polity.

For various reasons, both groups failed to achieve a distinctly New Testament Church, although both claimed to have done so. Inconsistencies by Presbyterian and Independent alike were mostly due to confusions regarding the Jewish economy and its impact on the New Testament church.

Congregational theory, if developed consistently, could have arrived at a workable New Testament pattern; but champions like Thomas Goodwin could not alienate themselves enough from the shadow of the "Jewish Church".

Failure of the Puritan Revolution was due in no small measure to inability to define the true relationship between Old and New Testaments. Questions of polity could be settled only by a prior solution to this problem.

¹Vide The Divine Right of Church Government by Sundry Ministers of Christ within the City of London (originally published in London, 1646, although I have used the Paisley edition of 1799), p. 64; George Gillespie, An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland etc. (Edinburgh, 1641), p. 21; Stephen Marshall, The Power of the Civil Magistrate in Matters of Religion Vindicated etc. (London: 1657), p. 3; et Richard Byfield, The Power of the Christ of God; etc. (London: 1641), "The Epistle dedicatory", unpagged, which encourages Parliament to refuse anything which does not "fasten its rootes in the New Testament" but then proceeds to urge an Old Testament "example for the duties of the magistrate (p. 42). The Westminster Confession of Faith had four Old Testament passages and only two from the New Testament to

prove the right of the magistrate to call synods; vide S.W. Carruthers, *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (Manchester: R. Aikman and Son, 1937), p.153 (Ch.XXI, "of Synods and Councils," sect. II). The two New Testament passages are very far fetched. I Tim. 2:1 and Matthew 2:4, 5. "Although both Puritan parties may have disagreed in principle about the proper place to search for church polity (i.e. whether in the Old or New Testaments), it is still true that they both adhered very closely to an Old Testament pattern for the Christian magistrate of the Church age. In this, the Independent leaders further manifested their proximity to the Presbyterian Right rather than the radical Left. Along with the foregoing Presbyterian quotations, cf. Thomas Goodwin, *Of the Constitution... of the Churches* (1696 ed.), op. cit., p. 236, IV; et John Cotton's *Keyes*, op. cit., pp. 50, 51. The crowning illustration of the Puritan concept of the Christian magistrate is found in the Westminster Confession of Faith, chap. XXIII:3 on the punishment of heresy by the civil power, where there are no less than 118 Old Testament proof texts given and only 12 from the New Testament, most of the latter necessitating far-fetched interpretations in order to prove the point."

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Scott Pearson, *Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism 1535-1603* (Cambridge: University Press, 1925), p. 418; C.E. Osborne, *Christian Ideas in Political History* (London: John Murray, 1929), pp. 151, 152; William M. Campbell, *The Triumph of Presbyterianism* (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1958), p. 151; Wilbur K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England 1603-1640* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1938), pp. 281, 276, III; G.D. Henderson, *Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland* (Cambridge: University Press, 1937), p. 13; H.H. Henson, *Studies in English Religion in the Seventeenth Century* (London: John Murray, 1903), p. 237.

3

Vide Chapter I of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

4

William Lyford, *Principles of Faith & Good Conscience Digested Into a Catechetical Form*: etc. (Third edition, Oxford: 1652), p. 31.

5

William Lyford, *The Plain mans Senses Exercised To Discern both Good and Evil*: etc. (London: 1655), p. 9. Cf. Thomas Hodges, *A Scripture Catechisme, towards the Confutation of Sundry Errours*; etc. (Oxford: 1658), p. 14, for a similar question and answer; et Horton Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans* (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1948), p. 50, for several scriptural passages which Puritans used to prove the authority of both the Old and New Testaments.

⁶S.W. Carruthers, *The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly* (Philadelphia: published by the Presbyterian Historical Societies of America and England, 1943), p. 111. Bracketed parts were added or revised by the Assembly.

7

Independents had to avoid the errors of antinomianism, which some of them did not do very successfully. Vide Nuttall, "Law and Liberty in Puritanism", *Congregational Quarterly*, XXIX:1 (Jan. 1951), p. 27f., who says that Independents, Baptists, and Quakers tended "to see the two Testaments in antithesis and to show sympathy towards an antinomianism doctrinal."; John Cook, *What the Independents Would have*, etc. (London: 1647), p. 8, admitted that Independents found certain commendatory elements in antinomianism; but John Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History of England: The Church of the Restoration* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1870), p. 405, II, believed that John Owen and Thomas Goodwin regarded Antinomianism as an "error" worthy of "the utmost abhorrence". Cf. Antinomianism in the Colony of Massachusetts

Bay 1636-38 (ed. by Charles Francis Adams, Boston: printed for the Prince Society, 1894).

⁸ John Lightfoot, The Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines: etc. (Works, XIII, ed. by John Rogers Pittman, London: 1824), p.9.

⁹ Gertrude Huehns, in her Antinomianism in English History with Special Reference to the Period 1640-1660 (London: Cresset Press, 1951), has no mention of Thomas Goodwin in connection with the issue. Cf. Frederick J. Powicke, A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter 1615-1691 (London: Jonathan Cape, Ltd., 1929), p.239f., who mentions an argument between Baxter and Owen over antinomianism.

¹⁰ Lightfoot, op.cit., p.106.

¹¹ Thomas Edwards calls attention to one error of the time: a denial of the Old Testament affecting Christians under grace. Some, he complained, do not read the Old Testament nor bind it in the same volume with the New; vide Gangraena: etc. (London: 1646), p.19. Against this extreme, the Apologists had been adamant. Categorically, they had stated that they did read both Testaments and their worship consisted of elements derived from Old as well as New Testament scriptures. Cf. Berndt Gustafsson, The Five Dissenting Brethren: etc. (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1955), p.21.

¹² William Twisse, The Doubting Conscience Resolved. etc. (London: 1652), unpaged introduction, entitled "A Perplexing Question".

¹³ Jordan, op.cit., p.318, 319, III.

¹⁴ E.g. Thomas Edwards, Reasons against the Independant Government of Particular Congregations: etc. (London: 1641), p.3ff.; et Samuel Rutherford, A Peaceable and Temperate Plea For Pauls Presbytery In Scotland, etc. (London: 1642)p.187ff., cpt. XIII, "No Independent Church in the New Testament".

¹⁵ Gillespie, An Assertion, op. cit., p.146.

¹⁶ Vide Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries etc. (London: 1644), p.51, "Our Church had bin visible since the Apostles". The writer tries to prove that the churches of Jerusalem, Corinth, Ephesus, Antioch, etc. were all Presbyterian churches. (p.425ff.). Cf. pp.231-236. The examples of New Testament churches were argued pro and con for years in the Westminster Assambly. Cf. James L. Ainslie, The Doctrines of Ministerial Order In the Reformed Churches of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1940), p.13: "In the New Testament especially they sought to discover whatever might direct them with regard to Church polity and the office of the Ministry."

¹⁷ Gillespie, An Assertion, op. cit., p.128.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.129.

¹⁹ Quoted from William Prymne, Twelve Questions, op. cit., p.6; cf. Rutherford, Due Right of Presbyteries, op. cit., p.60.

²⁰ Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p.65.

- ²¹Stephen Marshall, The Right Understanding of the Times: (London: 1647), p.32.
- ²²Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p.14. ²³Ibid., p.64.
- ²⁴Robert Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London: 1646), p.157.
- ²⁵Thomas Cartwright, Helps for the Discovery of Truth, op. cit., p.12.
- ²⁶Alexander F. Mitchell and John Sturthers (eds), Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines etc. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), p.67, Sess. 390, March 3, 1644/5.
- ²⁷Ibid., p.199, Sess. 603, March 13, 1645/6 Cf. Samuel Hudson, The Essence and Unfile of the Church Catholike Visible, and the Prioritie thereof in regard of Particular Churches Discussed. (London: 1643), p.17, on Mt. 16:18: "The place is meant of a Church future, to be built, which Christ then intended to set up..." There were very few Puritan authors who noted this future element in the founding of the Christian Church. This fact would have undercut the appeal to Old Testament precedents in polity.
- ²⁸Ibid., p.455, Sess. 631, April 30, 1646.
- ²⁹The Erastians in Parliament had a keener appreciation for a New Testament polity than the Erastians in the Assembly. Lightfoot was always insisting that the Old Testament made "no such distinctions" as the Presbyterians proposed. Vide Minutes, op. cit., p.430, Sess. 606, March 18, 1645/6; et Lightfoot, Journals, op. cit., p.42., Nov. 7, 1643, where Lightfoot makes it plain that the Old Testament is absolutely essential to the Erastian point of view. Both Coleman and Lightfoot, Erastian leaders in the Assembly, had been powerfully influenced by the Old Testament economy and by their own Hebrew studies. Vide W. M. Hetherington, History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (fourth edition ed. by Robert Williamson, Edinburgh: James Gemmell, 1878), p.136.
- ³⁰E.g. John Paget, A Defense of Church-Government, Exercised in Presbyteriall, Classicall, et Synodall Assemblies; etc. (London: 1641), pp. 34ff., cpt. II, "The first Argument taken from the words of the Law, Deut.17.17.8-12"; Charles Herle, The Independency on Scriptures of the Independency of Churches; etc. (London: 1643), p.4, "The first Argument, taken from the manner of government in the Jewish Church: laid downe Deut.17.8, 9, 10; 2 Chr.19.8, 10, 11; Psal.122.4, 5"; Gillespie, An Assertion, op. cit., pp.17ff., "The First Argument for ruling Elders, taken from the Jewish Church"; et Gilielmus Apollonii, A Consideration of Certain Controversies at this time agitated in the Kingdome of England, Concerning the Government of the Church of God. etc. (London: 1645), p.91, for a similar Old Testament proof of synods.
- ³¹Baillie, Dissuasive, op. cit., pp.157, 158.
- ³²Alexander F. Mitchell, The Westminster Assembly (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1883), p.293.
- ³³Richard Baxter, The Cure of Church-divisions; etc. (London: 1670), p.34.
- ³⁴Gillespie, An Assertion, op. cit., p.32.

³⁵Ibid., p.193.

³⁶Ibid., p.164.

³⁷Ibid., p.176. Gillespie was answering John Robinson who had warned that it was impossible to waken Moses from his grave in order to prove Presbyterian arguments. Thomas Edwards also had seen the weakness and inconsistency of the Independents' case, because he pointed out that they use Numbers 8:20 in order to prove ordination by laying on of hands and they also use Jeremiah 50:5 to prove a Church Covenant; vide Antapologia; or A Full Answer to the Apologeticall Narration etc. (London: 1646), p.56.

³⁸Lightfoot, Journal, op. cit., p.81, Dec. 13, 1643.

³⁹Ibid., p.83, Dec. 14, 1643.

⁴⁰Ibid., p.260, May 3, 1644. The verse reads: "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." In all probability, those who objected were not adverse to it because it came from the Old Testament, but because it seemed to have nothing to do with preaching elders in the Church.

⁴¹On the pro position, vide Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p.25; contra position, vide Christ on His Throne, or Christs Church government briefly laid downe; and how it ought to bee set up in all Christian Congregations (1640, author anonymous), p.17. Cf. Edwin Hall, The Puritans and their Principles (fourth edition, New York: Charles Scribner, 1851), p.350; et W.M.Hetherington, History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (fourth edition ed by Robert Williamson Edinburgh: James Gemmell, 1878), p.161.

⁴²Lightfoot, Journal, op. cit., p.40.

⁴³Ibid., p.219, March 18, 1644.

⁴⁴John Owen, The Duty of Pastors and People distinguished. etc. (London: 1644), p.7. This is also bound in Vol. XIX of the Works. James Moffat said that Owen did not incline so much to the Old Testament as many other Puritans; vide The Golden Book of John Owen; etc. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), p.48, introduction.

⁴⁵Christ on His Throne, op. cit., p.24. Dr. Geoffrey Nuttall has written on various aspects of this problem in his "Law and Liberty in Puritanism", Congregational Quarterly, XXIX:1 (Jan., 1951), pp.18ff. Cf. R.W.Dale, "The Old Antinomianism and the New," The Congregational Review, I (1887) pp. 11-18.

⁴⁶William Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, etc. (London: n.d.), p.170. A very perspicuous statement of the subject appears in ch. XXXVIII, (P.170ff.), "Of the administration of the Covenant of Grace, before Christ" et ch. XXXIX (p.175ff.), "Of the administration of the Covenant from Christ exhibited to the end of the World."

⁴⁷E.g. Thomas Goodwin, The Supereminence of Christ Above Moses, vol. V, Works, (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1863 ed.).

⁴⁸Henry Burton, A Vindication of Churches, commonly called Independent: etc.

(London: 1644), p.35.

⁴⁹ John Cotton, The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven, etc. (London: 1644), p.13. I have used an edition published in Boston in 1843 by Tappan and Dennet. The Savoy Declaration by the independents rejected this phraseology of the Westminster Assembly.

⁵⁰ Vide Christ on His Throne, op. cit., p.12-14.

⁵¹ Burton, A Vindication, op. cit., p.19.

⁵² Thomas Goodwin et al., An Apologeticall Narration Humbly Submitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament etc. (London: 1643), p.9. Vide also p.3.

⁵³ Thomas Edwards, Antapologia, op. cit., p.57. P.T. Forsyth has developed the theme of Independency drawing from both Calvinism and Anabaptism; vide Faith, Freedom and the Future (London: Independent Press, 1955 reprint).

⁵⁴ Vide Lewis (Louis), Du Moulin, The Conformity of the Discipline and Government of those who are commonly called Independants to that of the Ancient Primitive Christians (London: 1680), p.57.

⁵⁵ John Saltmarsh, The Divine Right of Presbyterie, etc. (London: 1646), p.4.

⁵⁶ Thomas Hooker, A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline. etc. (London: 1648), "The Preface", unpagued.

⁵⁷ Burton, A Vindication, op. cit., p.17.

⁵⁸ Henry Jacob, An attestation of many Learned, Godly, & famous Divines, Lightes of Religion, and pillars of the Gospell, justifying this doctrine, viz. That the church-government ought to bee always with the peoples free consent. etc. (1613: n.p.), p.317.

⁵⁹ Henry Burton, Conformitie's Deformity. etc. (London: 1646), p.9.

⁶⁰ John Owen, The duty of Pastors and People distinguished. etc. (London: 1644), p.10 (mispagued, it should be 2). The writer was still a Presbyterian when he wrote these words, but the sentiment is certainly that of an Independent.

⁶¹ Albert Peel, The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, 1658 (London: Independent Press, 1939), p.53, Ch. XIX: Sect. III.

⁶² Baillie, Dissuasive, op. cit., p.153.

⁶³ Vide e.g. Cotton, Keyes, op. cit., p.53. ⁶⁴ Du Moulin, op. cit., p.23.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.14 (misnumbered, it should be 24).

⁶⁶ Some Presbyterians have also engaged in these fruitless undertakings. Vide R. M^cCheyne Edgar, Progressive Presbyterianism: A Plea For Liberty and Enterprise In The Church (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton & Co., 1894), Ch I, p. lff.,

"Presbyterianism Older than Moses".

⁶⁷Vide William Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity (London: n.d.), p.141; et Burton, A Vindication, op. cit., p.28, who resorted to a faulty argument from analogy when confronted with the problem, saying that a covenant could not be proved from the New Testament and neither could infant baptism and giving communion to women...yet both were practised.

⁶⁸Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p.89.

⁶⁹Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), p.13, IV ⁷⁰Ibid., p.59.

⁷¹Stephen's sermon in Acts 7, was sometimes difficult for Independents to handle, because of its reference to the Jewish theocracy being a "church" (verse 38). This is the only verse in the New Testament where the subject is stated so clearly. Vide Goodwin, op. cit., pp.14, 74, to see how he treated the exposition of it. Cf. p.166ff., Chap. III, Bk. IV, entitled: "That the External Institutions of Christ, for the Government of his Saints under the New Testament, is not the same that was under the Law, nor can the Government of the Jewish Church, be made a certain Rule for the Government of the Church of Christ." This is the most important discussion by Goodwin on the relationship between the Old and New Testaments concerning polity.

⁷²Ibid., p.61.

⁷³Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), pp.401-402, IV.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp.99,169.

⁷⁵Ibid., pp.74,78,88. ⁷⁶Ibid., p.169.

⁷⁷Vide p.70ff., Ibid., where he discusses at length his reasons for holding the Church at Corinth to be Congregational; p.84ff. where he shows that the churches of Colosse, Philippi, Antioch, Troas, Galatia, and Laodicea were all Congregational churches; et Ch. V., p.132ff.

⁷⁸Ibid., p.176.

⁷⁹Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), p.135, IV. Cf. John Goodwin, Certain briefe Observations and Antiquaries: On Master Prin's Twelve Questions About Church Government. etc. (1644: n.p.), p.60, to see how this Independent made the doctrine of the presbyterian development theory look ridiculous. Some Presbyterians embarrassed themselves by admitting that some New Testament Churches were originally Congregational, because then the onus of proof was upon them to prove that this was not binding for all time. Thomas Goodwin exploited this Presbyterian dilemma to the greatest extent.

⁸⁰Ibid., p.136.

⁸¹Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), p.367, IV.

⁸²Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), p.117, IV.

⁸³Ibid., p.228. John Cotton, in his Keyes, op. cit., p.56 et passim used the verse in an identical connection.

⁸⁴Ibid., Works (1696 ed.), p.241, IV.

⁸⁵Ibid., p.247.

⁸⁶Ibid., p.252.

⁸⁷Ibid., p.338.

⁸⁸Ibid., p.356ff. ⁸⁹Ibid., p.280. ⁹⁰Vide p.299, op. cit.

⁹¹Loc. cit.

⁹² Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), second letter to Rev. Asty, bound in vol. IV, p.51.

⁹³ Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), p.20, IV.

⁹⁴ Vide the correspondence between Thomas and John Goodwin over the use of Church covenants, bound in vol. IV of Thomas'a Works (1696 ed.), p.41.

⁹⁵Ibid., p.46.

CHAPTER VII

PROGRESSIVE INTERPRETATION

SECTION A: THE ORIGIN OF THE DOCTRINE

Nascent Independency drew much of its nourishment from the doctrine of "progressive interpretation". Congregationalist champions wished to avoid peremptory dogmatism. They believed that God had yet more truth to unfold to the Church. To close the door on this possibility was to induce obscurantism.

In another part of this prelection, it has been intimated that one of the principal charges against Independency by the Presbyterians was that it was novel.¹ "Independency is contrary to all the discipline that ever was knowne to Christendome before the Anabaptists,"² wrote Robert Baillie. "...they attribute without fear, to a number of Scriptures, such new and strange senses as before them were never heard of:"³ William Prynne, too, made much of the fact that the Independents had no historical precedent before recent times.⁴

To this accusation, the Independents answered that God had shed new light on certain Scriptural passages and that the best way to hamstring the truth was to cut the tendon of cumulative knowledge.

The origin of the Independent doctrine of progressive interpretation is a moot question. The nexus between John Robinson and the Independents of the Sixteen-forties is difficult to trace in a catena of thought, but the conclusion is almost unavoidable that this Independent concept had its inception in Robinson's farewell speech to the departing Pilgrims on their way to the New World.⁵

SECTION B: THE INDEPENDENT POSITION⁶

Many recent scholars of Puritanism have noticed the crucial nature of the doctrine of "progressive interpretation".⁷ Our immediate attention, however, must be focused on the views of several Independents in juxtaposition to various Presbyterians.

Thomas Hooker asserted:

Truth is the Daughter of time, . . . Not that there is any change in truth, but the alteration grows, according to mens apprehensions, to whom it is more or lesse discovered, according to Gods most just judgement, and their own deservings.⁸

Not all of the Independents were so careful to make the point that truth was absolute. Some of them were so intent on leaving the door open for more truth, that they forgot to insure against losing what they had already attained. Hooker was convinced of Man's inability not Truth's inability:

The Sum is, we doubt not what we practise, but its beyond all doubt, that all men are liars, and we are in the number of these poor feeble men, either we do, or may err, though we do not know it, what we have learned, we professe, and yet professe still to live, that we may learn⁹

Its the perfection of a man, amidst these many weaknesses, we are surrounded withall, by many changes to come to perfection. Its the honour and conquest of a man truly wise to be conquered by the truth: and he hath attained the greatest liberty, that suffers himself to be led captive thereby.¹⁰

Almost every Independent writer of the times agreed with the anonymous person who asserted that in regard to polity, the Independents "have not concluded every

particular of their owne, but are still upon the search, and enquiry."¹¹

Even Thomas Fuller, who was not known for his accuracy in reporting, made the observation that "Their adversaries cavil hereat [i.e. against the Independent doctrine of progressive interpretation], as a reserve able to rout all the armies of arguments which are brought against them;" and "because 'one day teacheth another,' they will not be tied on Tuesday morning to maintain their tenets on Monday night, if a new discovery intervene."¹²

Not all the Independent brethren attempted to defend their innovations by appealing to their New Light theory. William Dell once asserted that the so-called "New Light" which many cried down, was in reality nothing but "Old Light" long obscured by Satan's machinations. It was only rediscovered in our day, said Dell.¹³ Such a defense obviated the Presbyterian contentions of "novelty".

SECTION C: THOMAS GOODWIN'S VIEW OF "PROGRESSIVE INTERPRETATION"

Contrary to any pragmatistical approach to exegesis, the Apologists at the Assembly clearly believed that they had

found principles enough, not onely fundamentall and essential to the being of a Church, but superstrucutory also for the welbeing of it, and those to us cleare and certaine, and such as might well serve to preserve our Churches in peace and from offense, and would comfortably guide us to heaven in a safe way¹⁴

They freely admitted that they did not possess infallible knowledge, but were careful to avoid the pitfall of skepticism. Things they could not justify from "a cleare resolution from Scripture example," they refused to practise "until God should give...further light."¹⁵ Nevertheless, their second principle of procedure was "Not to make our present judgement and practice a binding law unto our selves for the future (for God might show us more light in his word)".¹⁶ They applied this principle only within a

context of church polity.

Thomas Goodwin would have extended toleration to brethren differing in polity, but not to those who denied the faith.

our desire is, that the Churches of Christ would in this Age (wherein these things are enquired into, and the Reformation of Discipline yet imperfect) walk by this rule, that so far as they agree, and in common have found out the rule, to walk by it, and be obliged so to do, and wherein they differ or want that light that others have, they might be left to that rule which God hath set up, as the great Peacemaker and Arbiter in his Churches, not to judge one another for these things, but to say with the Apostle, 'These that are otherwise minded God shall reveal it to them in his due time, and in so doing know God will accept us, and we hope men will.'¹⁷

It was in regard to polity alone, that Goodwin could say, "in matters of practice Experience, with Faith waiting for Light, helps to the Knowledge, more than all the Study in the Abstract in the World can do."¹⁸

SECTION D: THE PRESBYTERIAN ATTACK ON THE DOCTRINE OF PROGRESSIVE INTERPRETATION

In spite of his reputation to the contrary, Thomas Edwards often made valid observations. He was certainly correct when he deduced that the Independent doctrine of "progressive interpretation" was one of the key-stones in the arch of their church polity: "we see you make so much of this principle, and are so in love with it, that you wish it next to your first principle, enacted as the most sacred Law of all other."¹⁹

Because of its crucial nature, Presbyterians set out to destroy it. Robert Baillie called it a "principle of mutability" and wondered how it would ever be possible to pin the Independents down to any particular tenet.²⁰ It was a "Skeptick irresolution... with ...no possibility of any fixed constancy."²¹

"This is a dangerous principle to go by in the Church of God," declared Edwards,

excellent for unstable men, and wanton wits fitted for libertines and running heads that love no fixed nor settled Government, and serves well to the humour of a few particular persons but pernicious and sad for Nation-all Churches and Kingdome, a reserve indeed a [s] a good back doore to go out as from Brownisme to Anabaptisme, to Sebaptisme, and from thence to Famialisme and Socinianism. It is a ready prepared way for those that would draw men into errours under the pretence of new light, to work upon, and so to lead men from one errour to another till there be no end.²²

Edwards felt that he had "arrived" at the pinnacle of truth in matters of polity. To acknowledge any such principle as the Independents proposed was to admit a "principle of uncertainty in matters of religion."²³

At the Westminster Assembly, the doctrine of "New Lights" was abhorred by some of the Presbyterians. On October 8, 1645, (Session 514), Edward Reynolds preached on the day of public humiliation. Among other errors, he attacked the "affectation of new lights of doctrine."²⁴ There is no indication that the Independents inside the Assembly were offended and it is plain that Reynolds's disagreement was primarily with Left-Wing groups outside, who did not limit the doctrine of "progressive interpretation" to polity.

A year later, on September 14, 1646 (Session 705), Thomas Gattaker presented to the Assembly, his book entitled Shadows without substance, or pretended new lights (London, 1646). It was a refutation of some of the tenets of the radical, John Saltmarsh. Again, we note that the bifurcation appeared outside and not inside the sed-erunt. This indicated that the Independent brethren there, were much more moderate in their doctrine of "New Lights" or "progressive interpretation" than many Left-Wing Puritans.²⁵

One possible exception should be mooted. Thomas Goodwin and the Independent brethren asked the Assembly if they could amend their "Reasons" against the Presbyterian Government on December 6, 1644.²⁶ The Presbyterians objected strenuously wishing that the Independent brethren be obliged to hold whatever positions they had already set to writing. It might appear that the Independents were invoking their

"progressive interpretation" theory in order to change their paper. However, an examination of the context reveals that they had not abjured their former opinions, but had written in such haste, that some things were omitted which they wished to include. Theirs was a cumulative, not a pragmatic concept of truth.

SECTION E: MODERATE PRESBYTERIANS AGREED TO THE DOCTRINE OF PROGRESSIVE INTERPRETATION

Not all the Presbyterians were so insular as to reject outright, the Independent concept of "New Light". Alexander Forbes expressed the wish that "this Principle may be a meanes of their union with us in the end."²⁷ Like many of the Presbyterian brethren, he felt that the Independents were far behind and needed to catch up. Such a principle was perfectly permissible so long as it facilitated the Independents drawing nearer their rivals. It never entered Forbes's thinking that the concept might be reciprocally operated in the direction of union with the Independents. He was convinced that Presbyterian polity was the final truth of God.

One of the critics of the Apologeticall Narration was Adam Steuart. It is interesting that he admits his essential agreement with the three principles of the Narration.²⁸ When he discusses them, he offers no criticism of number two (progressive interpretation) and very little concerning numbers one and three.

Daniel Cawdrey, one of the Assembly of divines, became involved in a pamphlet skirmish with John Owen several years after the sederunt had closed. At one point, he said that Owen could learn from the Apologists.

Not to be too peremptory in their new opinions, or wayes,
not too presumptuous in despising others proceedings, but
to reserve to themselves a latitude, and to keep some
casements open, to take in New light.²⁹

There was a certain amount of grudging approval as well as causticity in Cawdrey's opinion of the Apologeticall Narration.

Although Richard Baxter was never a Presbyterian,³⁰ yet his views often paralleled those of that persuasion. One of his life-long hopes was to promote a rapprochement between the Presbyterians and Independents. Whenever possible, he set forth mutual ground where both could build together. Sometimes, this was impossible as in the case of the differences over lay-preaching: "Let us close together, and pass this by, and God will further inform us, and dispel our darkness when we walk together in holy Love and Peace."³¹ Baxter, as well as many others, was not adverse to a doctrine of "progressive interpretation".

Even the pedantic Scot from St. Andrews, Samuel Rutherford, wrote that "Times wombe bringeth forth many truths, though truth be not a debtor to Time, because Time putteth new robes on old Truth; But truth is Gods debter, and oweth her being to him only."³²

Many Presbyterians at the Westminster Assembly did not wholly agree to stigmatizing the doctrine of "New Light" in their debates, let alone in their books written outside the Assembly. In the discussion over the office of lay elder, when there was such violent antipathy between Scots and the English Presbyterians, Henry Wilkinson spoke out. He asked the question concerning I Tim. 5.17: "If the place alledged hold so clear a ground for a ruling elder, how comes it to pass it was never seen before Calvin?"³³ Whether or not Wilkinson was correct is no concern of ours. The point to be made is that some of the Presbyterians were willing to receive such a doctrine even if it had little historical precedent. The basis for such a belief would necessitate a form of "progressive interpretation".

SUMMARY

The Independents believed that the reception of God's truth concerning Church polity involved a cumulative effort. Congregationalists built much of their ecclesiology on the principle of progressive interpretation of Scripture based on John Robinson's putative speech to the departing Pilgrims. By this means they obviated Presbyterian criticisms of "novelty", and although many synodical men attacked the idea as

pragmatic (which was not true), yet some received it as earnestly as did the Independents. Eschatologically, nothing could more clearly illustrate the Congregational view of the "last times" than their doctrine of progressive interpretation whereby it was shown that God was now revealing more truth from his Holy Word.

¹Vide supra.

²Robert Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London, 1646), p. 215.

³Ibid., p. 79.

⁴William Prynne, Twelve Considerable Serious Questions touching Church Government etc. (London, 1644), p. 5. On page three, the author finds quite invidious the doctrine of "more light of truth to be revealed."

⁵Some have doubted the historical accuracy of this speech. Vide Geoffrey F. Nuttall, The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), p. 24n, who quotes from Alexander Gordon in the Dictionary of National Biography. Gordon thought that the speech was authentic even though it was recorded twenty years post eventum. Albert Peel held the speech to be genuine, also. Vide The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, 1658. (London: Independent Press, 1939), p. 10. It is to be regretted that Peel did not reference this book; its value is therefore somewhat diminished. Part of the speech is given by Arthur Barker, in his Milton and the Puritan Dilemma 1641-1660 (The University of Toronto Press, 1942), p. 76. Robinson told the departing pilgrims "to follow him to further than he followed Christ; and if God should reveal anything to us by any other instrument of his to be as ready to receive it as ever we were to receive any truth by his ministry. For he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of his Holy Word." Cf. Neal's History of the Puritans, 110-11, II; Edward Winslow et Burgess's John Robinson, p. 239. Jordan, Development of Religious Toleration in England, 242, II; et Allen, English Political Thought 1603-1644, 151, both doubted the speech's authenticity. Barker, op. cit., p. 356, discusses at some length the question and concludes that it is Robinson's sentiments. But whatever is the truth regarding Robinson's putative speech, an error was made by Ephraim Pagitt, in his Heresiography: Or a Description of the Heretickes and Sectaries Sprang up in these latter times. etc. (London: fourth edition, 1647), p. 82, who erroneously reported that the reason the Leyden Church went to New England was the death of John Robinson. Robinson was certainly alive when half his congregation sailed away and could have given such a parting message. Actually, he did not die until 1625, several years after the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock.

⁶All who held this doctrine were not Independents in the full sense of the word. William Ames was more or less one of them, and gives his view in The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the holy Scriptures, and the Interpreters thereof, and brought into Method (London, n.d.), p. 151. Vide also Thomas Browne, Religio Medici (London: Everyman's Library), pp. 7ff., Pt. I, as cited by Paul Elmer More et Frank Leslie Cross, Anglicanism, the Thought and Practice of the Church of England, Illustrated from the Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century (London: SPCK, 1935), p. 195.

⁷Vide Winthrop S. Hudson, "Denominationalism As a Basis for Ecumenicity: A Seventeenth Century Conception," Church History, XXIV:I (March, 1955), pp. 35, 48n; Geoffrey F. Nuttall, The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), p. 105ff.; -----, "Walter Craddock: The Man and His Message (1606? - 1659)," Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society, XIII (1937-39), p. 15; Earnest A. Payne, The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1944), p. 50 (?); et A. S. P. Woodhouse, Puritanism and Liberty (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Limited, 1950), pp. 45, 46. Woodhouse believes that "This experimental spirit, this eager quest of truth (whether adequately or inadequately conceived), with the attendant confidence in truth's power to guard itself and to prevail if given an open field, is the deepest and most abiding element in the Puritan campaign for liberty of conscience."

⁸Thomas Hooker, A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline. etc. (London, 1648), "The preface", unpagued.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Toleration Justified, and Persecution condemn'd. etc. (London, 1646), p. 5. Cf. Thomas Weld, A Briefe Narration of the Practises of the Churches in New England. etc. (London, 1645), p. 18.

¹²Thomas Fuller, The Church History of Britain, From The Birth of Jesus Christ Until The Year MDCXLVIII (London: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1837 ed.), p. 462, III.

¹³William Dell, Right Reformation: or the Reformation of the Church of the New Testament, etc. (London: 1651), p. 99.

¹⁴Thomas Goodwin, et al., An Apologeticall Narration Humbly Submitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament (London, 1643), p. 9.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁶Loc. cit.

¹⁷Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), p. 29, IV. op. cit.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 28. Cf. Works (1861 ed.), p. xxix, I., preface to the reader.

¹⁹Thomas Edwards, Antapologia: or a Full Answer to the Apologeticall Narration etc. (London, 1646), p. 70.

²⁰Baillie, Dissuasive..., op. cit., p. 101.

²¹Ibid., p. 102

²²Edwards, Antapologia..., op. cit., p. 69. Cf. Guilielmus Apollonii, A Consideration of Certain Controversies at this time agitated in the Kingdome of England, Concerning the Government of the Church of God. etc. (London, 1645), "Dedicatory Preface", unpagued. Apollonius speaks against innovations and innovators in Holland, evidently referring to the Arminians whom he likens to the innovators in England. Vide also Lazarus Seaman, the ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗ proved to be ΠΑΡΑΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗ etc. (London, 1647), "Epistle to the Reader," unpagued: "many Old Errors are revived, under the name of New Light".

²³ Ibid., p.70. It is not at all certain that the Apologists would have applied their principle so widely afield as Edwards did. He took it out of its context of polity and added something quite foreign.

²⁴ Alexander F. Mitchell et John Struthers (eds.), Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines etc. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), p.140, *italics mine*.

²⁵ Ibid., p.281.

²⁶ John Lightfoot, The Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines: From January 1, 1643, to December 31, 1644, etc. (Vol. XIII of Works, ed. by John Rogers Pitman, London: 1824), p.339.

²⁷ Alexander Forbes, An Anatomy of Independency, or A Briefe Commentary, and Moderate Discourse upon the Apologeticall Narration etc. (London, 1644), p.29.

²⁸ Adam Steuart, Some Observations and Annotations Upon the Apologeticall Narration, etc. (London, 1643), p.21.

²⁹ Daniel Cawdrey, Independencie A Great Schism: Proved Against Dr. Owen etc. (London, 1657), pp.217-229.

³⁰ Vide infra, appendix.

³¹ Richard Baxter, Church Concord: etc. (London, 1691), p.40. The first part of this was originally written in 1655 and the second part in 1667.

³² Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries or, A Peaceable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland (London, 1644), "To the Reader", unpagged. Cf. Thomas Hooker's statement, *supra*. A.F. Mitchell calls attention to a copy of the "Westminster Directory for Public Worship" which belonged to Immanuel Bourne, one of the ministers appointed by the Parliament to ordain in the city of London (1645-1649). "In the copy of the Directory which belonged to Immanuel Bourne the first of this section is carefully and minutely subdivided and annotated, and special attention is directed to the sentence which counsels the preacher still to seek for further illumination of God's Spirit by prayer and a humble heart, resolving to admit and receive any truth not yet attained whenever God shall make it known to him." Vide The Westminster Assembly (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1883), p.241.

³³ Lightfoot, op. cit., p.71 (December 6, 1644).

CHAPTER VIII

ESCHATOLOGY AND THE PRESBYTERIAN-INDEPENDENT CONTROVERSY

Of the three principal areas of disagreement among Puritan Independents and Presbyterians, i.e. Bibliological, Ecclesiological, and Eschatological, the last named presents a quintessential nexus between the other two. Without it, the various Bibliological and Ecclesiological points of difference become nothing more than a desultory collection of unrelated facts. At the nucleus of the controversy lay divergent methods of viewing apocalyptical issues. The Eschatological approach to hermeneutics influenced the Puritan Independent's Bibliological concepts which in turn produced his Ecclesiological conclusions.¹ Because many Puritans believed themselves to be living in the Last Days, the doctrine of the Church was studied in that environment.

SECTION A: PURITANS AND THE IMMINENT RETURN OF CHRIST

Through the powerful medium of Puritan apocalyptic preaching, the Presbyterian-Independent controversy comes more sharply into focus. Eschatological ideas everywhere abounded. Sermons of the day testify to their ubiquity. Many Puritans felt that they were living in the last days described by Paul in II Thessalonians 2:3, and

that the deliverance would only come from Christ's return to earth.

Look to the Apostacy of the present age, men falling from all things in Religion, and with an impudent face denying, deriding all; the Scriptures, the Trinity, the Godhead of Christ, his sufferings and satisfaction, Justification by imputed Righteousness, the Law of God as the Rule of Obedience and whatsoever Doctrines Christian Religion is built upon: . . . we see men fall from one thing to another, untill they hold to nothing in matters of Religion: such an Apostacy (as I think, I may without breach of Charity say) that hath not been the like in any Christian Church, . . .²

The imminent coming of Christ was expected by many, although not all agreed as to the manner of His appearance. "The Eminent Thing of the World," wrote Peter Sterry, "is the Coming of our Lord Jesus into the world." But, continued Sterry, this coming is not the cataclysmic expectation of the radical prophet. .

The First Comming of our Lord Jesus is Carnall. This was then, when he took Flesh of the Virgin Mary.

The Second Comming of our Saviour is Spirituall.

Mat. 24. 8. The Lord Jesus discoursing of His Comming, having beforespoken of Warres, Famines, Pestilences, Earthquakes: tells us in this Verse: All these are the Beginning of Sorrowes. 'Tis in Greek, *Ἀρχὴ ὀδύνης*, The Beginning of Pangs. The Commotions and Strife in This visible Frame are the Pangs and³ Thrones, by which It labours to bring forth Christ in the Spirit.

Sterry's spiritualization of many eschatological passages was not followed by others of his brethren, some of whom were authoring more sensational expositions of Scripture. While languishing in a dungeon in Guernsey, Henry Burton had good reason to think that the end of the age was present,⁴ but it was somewhat presumptuous of him to liken himself and his fellow sufferer William Prynne to the two witnesses left for dead three and a half days (Revelation II).⁵ His testimony to the end of the age is typical:

this is the time, foretold of old, the time of the sixth Trumpet sounding forth woe against the Beast, for slaying the two Witnesses, after whose reviving againe, there follows a great earthquake, after which followeth the destruction of the Beasts Kingdome under the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, when the Kingdomes of this world are become the Kingdomes of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reigne for ever and ever.

The events of the day were interpreted by many as fulfillments of various Biblical prophecies.⁶ William Bridge, in one of his sermons before Parliament, gave them this piece of advice: "Oh, spread the Gospel, and by your meanes let us see the Angel flying in the midst of our Heavens, with the Everlasting Gospel in his hand."⁷ Oliver Cromwell, too, looked for glorious eschatological events. "I am one of those whose heart God hath drawn out to wait for some extraordinary dispensations accomplished in the latter time," he once said, adding, "I cannot but think that God is beginning of them!"⁸ Similar hopes were expressed by Thomas Goodwin:

the shorter time Satan hath, the more is his rage, so the shorter time Christ hath, and the nearer he is to the possession of his kingdom, the more is his zeal for his saints, and indignation against his enemies. His heart is set upon it, and the more eager doth his desire become every day to attain his long-expected kingdom, and to throw down all that oppose it; and therefore it is that we see in this latter age he hath made such changes in the world. We have seen him do that in a few years that he hath not done in an hundred years before; for he being King of nations, and King of saints, he pursues his interest; and being more near his kingdom, he takes it with violence. We are now within the whirl of it, therefore his motions are rapt. Hence, therefore, all states and kingdoms had need now (of all times else) to be instructed;⁹

Although Presbyterians and Independents disagreed generally about many aspects of eschatology, and especially about such issues as chiliasm, yet both preached apocalyptically. Synodical men no less than their counterparts expected Christ to come at any moment. John Owen who was not yet converted to Independency in the early 1640's, was a typical example:

The glasse of our lives, seemes to runne and keep pace with the extremity of time: the end of those ends of the world which began with the Gospell, is doubtlesse comming upon us, hee that was instructed what should bee, till time should be no more, said, it was *ἡ ἑσχάτη ὥρα* the last houre in his time: much sand cannot be behind, and Christ shakes the glasse: many minutes of that houre cannot remaine; the next measure we are to expect, is but a moment, the twinkling of an eye, wherein we shall be changed: ¹⁰

The motive for Christian preaching was to be centered in an eschatological hope according to Richard Baxter: "I know not what others think of them, but for my part, I am ashamed of my stupidity and wonder at myself that I deal not with my own and

other's souls as one that looks for the great day of the Lord.¹¹ Richard Byfield, one of the members of the Westminster Assembly, was an extraordinary apocalyptic preacher. In 1641, he saw nothing but glory ahead in the great events then transpiring in England: "These are the times, in which that voice hath sounded, and the shoute increaseth, Babylon is fallen, is fallen: the times in which Antichrist is going into perdition."¹²

Similar optimism was voiced by William Gouge, another Westminster divine:

we...live in the later part of the last day (to which better things are reserved then in the former part). Therefore, we should endeavour to be better then all the former.¹³

SECTION B: SECONDARY ESCHATOLOGICAL ISSUES IN THE PURITAN THINKING

In connection with a belief in the imminent return of Christ, Puritan eschatology was characterized by important secondary issues such as the regathering and conversion of the Jews,¹⁴ differing ideas concerning the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of Christ,¹⁵ the setting of dates in connection with prophetic passages of Scripture¹⁶ and millenarianism, which was far and away the most predominant of all elements of Puritan eschatology.

Although the doctrine of chiliasm cut across denominational ties¹⁷ there is little doubt that it was an important factor in dividing the Presbyterians and Independents in the 1640-1660 era. Its divisive nature is the most striking because there were many Presbyterian chiliasts as well as many Independents.¹⁸ Robert Baillie reported in 1645 from London: "the most of the chiefe divines here, not only Independents, bot others, such as Twisse, Marshall, Palmer, and many more, are express Chiliasts."¹⁹

But in spite of this situation, most criticism of chiliasm came from Presbyterian pens,²⁰ and those who did not expressly condemn the Independents for millenarian tendencies, probably refrained only because so many English Pres-

byterians had imbibed the teaching themselves.²¹

Many famous Independents were millenarians.²² One of these was Thomas Goodwin whose reputation and moderacy rendered him a prime target for the critics of millenarian teachings. Although he was pre-millennial with strong eschatological convictions, it is significant that he did not make eschatological agreement necessary as an article of faith.²³

His church in Arnheim became associated with the most radical chiliastic preaching,²⁴ although it probably did so after he had returned to England leaving his successor John Archer to pastor the flock. In England, Goodwin eventually had to dissociate himself from the extreme Fifth Monarchy movement that attempted to use his name tendentiously.²⁵ There were many differences between Thomas Goodwin's eschatology and the Fifth Monarchist, John Rogers, whose main views are here outlined:²⁶ (1) the date 1666 was the date for the beginning of the Fifth Monarchy; but (2) Rogers insisted that saints were not to be connected with any religious organization in preparation for the impending Kingdom; (3) there was to be universal toleration of all religions and the magistrate was to exercise no compulsion in dealing with heretics; (4) magistrates, in fact, are superfluous; (5) Cromwell was denounced as anti-christ, the man of sin, the great dragon, because he dismissed Barebone's Parliament.²⁷ Goodwin would have disagreed in every particular, excepting possibly the first.²⁸

The prominent feature of Thomas Goodwin's eschatology is his insistence on a reign of the saints on earth. Without such a reign, God would be unjust, because there must be a time when God's people are vindicated against the evil nations that have oppressed and persecuted them.²⁹ "Jesus Christ himself is . . . both . . . a King, and . . . a Priest; . . . and answerably, he makes the Saints partakers of the privileges which he himself hath."³⁰ But a king requires a kingdom. And since we cannot be kings unto God, then we must be kings unto the creatures.³¹ Furthermore, this reign is both future and present. Already the saints reign ("thou hast made us kings

and priests") through prayer, ³² but this is not to exclude a future reign, as well. The scripture also says, "we shall reign on the earth". ³³ The saints are kings in all ages, but still "there is a particular time in which it is to be accomplished" more completely than ever before. ³⁴ Nor does Revelation 20:4, 6 mean that the saints are to rule in heaven, because, as Goodwin points out, Satan has been bound when these verses appear and there would be no reason for him to be bound if the saints are not on the earth. ³⁵ Satan has no access to the saint in heaven. Another proof of the saint s' ruling on earth is found in the simple fact that in heaven they are to rule forever, whereas this scripture indicates that their rule is limited to a thousand years. A time limit could only refer to the earth. In heaven there is no time. ³⁶

Goodwin's reign of the saints is enhanced by the fact that Christ delegates to them His authority without exercising it personally Himself, except through the actions of His people:

I do not say that Christ himself shall come down from heaven to reign here on earth; but let it be understood that Christ shall still remain in heaven, and there to be his court, where he shall reign both over this world and the world to come. ³⁷

Only the saint is to be in earth, not his Lord. ³⁸

SECTION C: AN ESCHATOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN-INDEPENDENT CONTROVERSY

Almost every element of the Presbyterian-Independent conflict is capable of an eschatological interpretation... and was so interpreted by contemporary observers as well as subsequent historians. In other sections of this thesis we have discussed some of these elements. The signing of the Solemn League and Covenant which eventually prejudiced so much of the Presbyterian exegesis was a case in point. Philip Nye's sermon on the occasion shows how it was viewed from the standpoint of Puritan eschatology. "The effect of the oath you shall finde to be this," thundered

the Independent preacher, "that the Kingdomes of the world become the Kingdomes of the Lord and his Christ, and he shal reigne for ever, Rev. 11."³⁹ He looked on the signing of the Covenant as the beginning of the work of Revelation seventeen where the Lamb overcomes the Beast and judges the Great Whore.⁴⁰ The sermon is a typical example of the Puritan practice of interpreting contemporary history in the light of far-fetched eschatological extremities. He ends it however with the orthodox prayer of the Apostle John, "even so come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen." ⁴¹

The jus divinum pretensions of both sides were always conditioned by the coming of Christ.⁴²

Thomas Goodwin saw the controversy over National Churches through eschatological glasses. He writes in his commentary on Revelation:⁴³

This being the exceeding great error and defect laid in the foundation of the churches of the first Reformation, especially in our British churches, ---namely, the adjoining this outward court of carnal and unregenerate Protestants, and receiving them from the first into the temple, worship, and communion of all ordinances; so that the bounds of the church were extended as far as the bounds of the commonwealth; which was done out of human prudence, suddenly to greaten the party against the Gentiles in the city: that as the earth helps the woman, chap. XII, so this, as an outward court, might round about shield the true temple and worshippers in it against the beast. And then, on the other side, this being, in this new-begun and second reformation of these churches, the main fundamental principle which is here mentioned, of receiving none into churches but only such worshippers as the reed, or light of the word, so far as it gives rules to judge others by, applied by the judgment of men, who yet may err, shall discover to be truly saints, (which belongs to another dispute;) and this vision falling out in, and as belonging, to, the times of this latter age, and being purposely intended, as it were, to amend and correct that very error: hence it seems most properly to belong to this work of a second reformation.⁴⁴

Insofar as the Presbyterian-Independent controversy was confined to national churches, Goodwin considered it primarily an eschatological issue. The reformers themselves even came under the apocalyptic search-light of seventeenth century Puritan criticism.

One of the keystones of the Presbyterian ecclesiastical system was the pyramid

of gradually ascending church courts. George Gillespie asked rhetorically:

What if the one halfe of a Classical Presbytery turne to be hereticall, or it may bee the major part? They shall either have most voyces for them, and there shall bee no remedy, unlesse the authoritative determination of a synod be interposed.

But the young Scot misunderstood Independent fears. It was not so much grass root heresy Congregationalists feared as it was unorthodoxy in the top ecclesiastical echelons. They feared that the Presbyterian system of subordination might become corrupted at the top instead of the bottom. Their question concerned possible heresy of the synod or even the national assembly. Gillespie's optimism would never admit the possibility of error being so rampant as that, but many Independents feared Presbytery on eschatological grounds, namely, that it would make way for antichrist to seize control at the apex of such a concentration of ecclesiastical power.⁴⁵

Other important issues between Presbyterians and Independents can be understood eschatologically. The multiplication of sects which Presbyterians observed with horror and which many Independents seemed to foster was interpreted as a sign of impending judgment and of the "last days". The London ministers bemoaned that "our dangers, difficulties and necessities are as great as theirs, by reason of false teachers and corrupt doctrines, which were foretold should appear in the last times, I Tim. IV. 1. 2 Pet. II. 1."⁴⁶ Significantly, they do not come right out and admit that they are in the last days because of the heretics,⁴⁷ but other Presbyterians did. Dr. John Bastwick remarked that

Before the Independents apparition in our Horizon, ther were but three or foure Sects known among us, and they were few in number, and well-conditioned; but out of the Independents lungs are sprung above forty severall sorts of straglers, which before their comming over were never heard of among us. John Lilburn related it unto me, and that in the presence of others, That returning from the wars to London, he met forty new Sects, and many of them dangerous ones, and some so pernicious, that howsoever, as he said, he was in his judgement for Toleration of all Religions, yet he professed he could scarce keep his hands off them, so blasphemous they were in their opinions: So that he gathered that these were now the last days, wherein so many Heresies abounded. There are innumerable Diabolicall Sects, and so prodiginously impious, that it is not for a Christian to name their opinions; and most of them if not all, were first Independents, and such as separated from our Congregations as

unholy, and were of the new gathered Churches, and followers of their Ministry.⁴⁸

The question of toleration itself had a marked eschatological basis. G. P. Gooch was correct in saying that it was no comfort for a persecuted subject to be told that his sovereign would be damned in the next life. Hope in the last days would not be enough to produce a tolerant spirit.⁴⁹ But, on the other hand, it is wrong to usurp the angelic prerogative and attempt to harvest the devilish tares prematurely. We should be tolerant at least until the Second Coming of Christ.⁵⁰

The element of democracy in the controversy might also be interpreted eschatologically.⁵¹ The practice of interpreting the Bible by means of a "literal" exegesis has been discussed. Here, too, the matter of eschatology came into play. Independents who believed in chiliasm, arrived at their doctrine primarily through a literal interpretation of various key Scriptural passages.⁵²

Inconsistencies regarding the use of the Old Testament became apparent in the controversy. Presbyterians interpreted Old Testament passages relating to the magistrate literally and most Puritan intolerance is directly attributed to this practice, but the same divines spiritualized all the passages relating to chiliasm. Independents, too, are culpable, however, because they based many of their chiliastic extremes on the Old Testament at the same time professing to be building a New Testament Polity.

The Independent doctrine of Progressive Interpretation must be viewed as essentially an eschatological issue.⁵³ Few writers expressed it more clearly than Thomas Hooker, who gave a panoramic view of church history in his Survey, showing how God had gradually been giving more and more light until his day. "These are the times drawing on," he wrote, "wherein Prophecies are to attain their performances:... These are the times, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters the Sea:...⁵⁴ According to the New England Divine, God had reserved two great truths to unfold in the seventeenth century:

These two things seeming to be great reserves of inquiry, for this last age of the world, 1. Wherein the spirituall rule of Christs kingdome consists, the manner how it is reviled [sic] and dispensed to the souls of his servants inwardly. 2. The order and manner, how the government of his kingdome is managed outwardly in his Churches. Upon these two things the tedious agitations that are stirring in the earth turn, either having their first rise from hence directly, or by a secret influence.⁵⁵

A more complete delineation of the Presbyterian-Independent controversy would be difficult to find. The publishers of Hooker's book agreed with him that

The eternal blessed Lord, whose waies of mercy to his redeemed ones (as his judgements to others) are unsearchable and past finding out, hath through the contrivances of his infinite wisdom, reserved many glorious discoveries of the for ever to be adored depths and riches of his grace in Jesus Christ, to this last age of the world.

So he hath in a special manner caused the truths concerning his visible government of the Saints in this world, in communion and fellowship with himself, and one with another, according to the order of the Gospel, as with more glory to break forth, so with more power to lay hold upon the spirits of many, then in former times.⁵⁶

Presbyterians were divided on the issue of progressive interpretation. Oliver Bowles admitted that men "now live in light, whereas other ages were in darkness."⁵⁷ William Twisse was not so sure. He called attention to the fact that many things were still dark and unfathomable for human wisdom, especially eschatological truths:

the Figures of the Prophecy of the Apocalyps, and infinite other things belonging to the fulfilling of those Prophecies, were hidden from the Prophets themselves, and the Fathers, (much more then from others) and are yet hidden.⁵⁸

Many puritans felt that eventual ecclesiastical rapprochement among the various differing parties could only come about in an apocalyptic crisis. Efforts put forth by men like Richard Baxter and John Dury toward ecumenicity were viewed with reserve by some who expected union among churches as a salutary effect of Christ's speedy return to the earth. "That which is so much alleged for unity shall one day be fulfilled," wrote Thomas Goodwin, "but it will be when Christ is Lord of all the earth, and not till then. Christians will not agree till then."⁵⁹ The heart of Good-

win's thought on ecclesiastical union is "Christus Pax nostra." ⁶⁰ According to him, "the Saints Shall and Must be one, and reconciled in the end." ⁶¹ Thomas Goodwin's method of unity is not a new creed or a shorter one like Baxter's but a new devotion to Christ by all parts of the Christian Church. Christ hath slain "the enmities that are amongst the people of God themselves." In fact, "Christ in reconciling us to God himselfe, carried it so, and did it under such a consideration and respect, as necessarily drew on and involved our reconciliation one with another." ⁶² Jeremiah Burroughs rejoiced that church divisions would not last, because "Satans time is not long... Surely Christ our Prince of Peace is at hand, he will tread downe Satan under our feet shortly." ⁶³ Probably, some Puritans did not try as hard as others for peace, because they looked for Christ to come and accomplish the task for them. This may partially explain why Baxter had little success in getting Independents to cooperate in his irenic endeavours. In this connection, an interesting sentence was added to the Savoy Declaration which did not appear in the Westminster Confession of Faith:

As the Lord in his care and love towards his Church, hath in his infinite wise providence exercised it with great variety in all ages, for the good of them that love him, and his own Glory: so according to his promise, we expect that in the later days, Antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the Kingdom of his dear Son broken, and Churches of Christ being enlarged, and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in this world a more quiet, peaceable and glorious condition then they have enjoyed. ⁶⁴

SUMMARY

The Presbyterian-Independent Controversy covered three main areas of disagreement: Bibliological, Ecclesiological, and Eschatological, and the last named element is the connecting link between the other two. Most Puritans felt that they were living in the last days and that spectacular events were imminent in human history. Presbyterian and Independent alike preached enthusiastically of Christ's soon coming. But on secondary eschatological issues, the two main Puritan parties did not always agree. Such things as the conversion of the Jewish nation, the Kingdom of Christ in its relationship to the Church, the setting of dates for apocalyptic

happenings, and of course, chiliastic extravagances, all these were tremendously divisive in their contribution to the controversy. Millenarianism itself, was one of the greatest sources of disagreement especially as it affected the Puritan's concept of the Church. The importance of Eschatology in considering the controversy can perhaps best be judged by the fact that nearly every single point of disagreement between Presbyterians and Independents is capable of an eschatological interpretation. The jus divinum theories, the argument over national churches, the subordination of synods, the growth of the sects and its correlated doctrine of toleration, democracy, ecumenicity, a literalism in Biblical hermeneutics, inconsistent practices connected to faulty interpretations of the Old Testament, and progressive interpretation, can all be understood best in a context of Puritan apocalypticism.

¹ The reformers were not much concerned with eschatology and left it for their successors to work out. It is interesting that the two most prominent aspects of theology omitted by the reformers, i.e. eschatology and ecclesiology, should have been so connected in the thinking of their followers in the next century. Heinrich Quistrop, in his Calvin's Doctrine of the Last Things (London: Lutterworth Press, 1955, tr. by Harold Knight), p.11, says of the reformers: "Too preoccupied with their own peculiar theme and too much afraid of distortions, they never succeeded in attaining any conclusive and independent formulation of Christian eschatology." Cf. pp.13, 55, 109.

² William Strong, A Voice from Heaven, calling The People of God to a Perfect Separation from Mystical Babylon etc. (London: 1654), p.21. This was a sermon on Rev. 18.4 and was directed against the papists. Vide p.1. Cf. Thomas Goodwin's Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.14: "The Spirit foretold that there should be an Apostacy of the Churches to Popery in the latter times, when there should be a perversion, as of the Doctrine, so of the Apostolical Order and Worship set up in the first Churches..."

³ The Clouds in Which Christ Comes. etc. (London: 1648), p.10. 11, 15, 18, 35, 36, 38.

⁴ Vide A Narration of the Life of Mr. Henry Burton. wherein Is set forth the various and remarkable Passages thereof, his Sufferings, Supports, Comforts, Deliverances. etc. (London: 1643), p.28.

⁵ Ibid., p.39.

⁶ Ibid., pp.28, 37. Many Independents felt that they were living in Paul's "perilous times" especially regarding "seducing spirits". Cf. Albert Peel (ed.), The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, 1658 (London: Independent Press, 1939), p.29.

⁷ The Saints Hiding Place In the time of Gods Anger. etc. (London: 1647), "The Epistle Dedicatory", unpagged, referring to Rev. 14:6. Thomas Goodwin, in another Parliamentary sermon interpreted Rev. 17:16 as a bar to the Spanish monarchy. Vide The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms, bound in the Works (1861 ed.), p.55, XII. To many Puritans, the daily fulfillments of Biblical prophecy presented a powerful and irrefutable argument for the truthfulness of the Word of God. Goodwin once said

that, "It hath been one great outward evidence to my faith, of the truth of the New Testament, that what was in particular foretold in this book so distinctly, should come to pass as we see it hath done." Ibid., p.56.

⁸ Cited from the Clarke Papers, p.379, by Rufus M. Jones, in his Mysticism and Democracy in the English Commonwealth: etc. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932), p.119.

⁹ Great Interest, op. cit., p.54. Goodwin's position was different from the radical Fifth Monarchy men. The former had Christ taking the kingdom by violence; the latter had the saints taking the kingdom by violence.

¹⁰ The Duty of Pastors and People distinguished. etc. (London: 1644), pp.1, 27. Although Owen was probably the greatest Calvinist since Calvin, yet he parted company with his teacher on the issue of eschatology. Calvin had posited a "long wait" theory which his Puritan successor felt unjustified. Calvin's thought on the subject is set forth by Quistorp, op. cit., pp.27, 94, 110, 111, 112: "It is far from the Lord to appoint a fixed day as though the Last Judgment were necessarily imminent... He will rather to educate His disciples in patient waiting: they must take heart and realize that still many a long stretch must be traversed before the day of complete salvation." "We get too hasty and impetuous if the day of our redemption is not awaited with a quiet disposition." "The time seems to us so long because we try to measure it by the standards of this transient life. If we were able to grasp the eternal duration of the future life, then many centuries would appear to us as a moment as 2 Peter 3:8 teaches." Quistorp shows how Calvin was influenced by Augustine's eschatological concepts in his denunciation of imminency, in his insistence on the hiddenness of the Day of Christ, and in his "long wait" before the end. Roland H. Bainton, The Travail of Religious Liberty (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), p.64, sums up Calvin's "long wait" theory: "the early Christians, and Luther after them, expected the imminent return of the Lord, but Augustine, and Calvin in his wake, projected the coming indefinitely into the future. In that case the historical process becomes the field of God's operation. Here in religious form is the doctrine of progress." Owen was much closer to Martin Luther's eschatological views than to John Calvin's. Cf. Martin Luther's The Signs of Christs coming, and Of the Last Day. etc. (London: 1661), which was published at the Restoration, but evidently after Venner's abortive rebellion. The full implications of Luther's view vs. Calvin's view (i.e. Owen's view vs. the usual Presbyterian view) is seen in two quotations, the first from Ephraim Pagitt, as found in David Masson, The Life of John Milton: etc. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1859-1894), p.152, III: "Our Apocalyptical men... study more future events than their present duty" On the Independents' side, we refer to Jeremiah Burroughes, Jerusalem's Glory Breaking forth into the World Being a Scripture-Discovery of the New Testament Church, In the Latter Days Immediately before the Second Coming of Christ (n.p.: 1675), p.8: "the glory of Jerusalem shall not come from the Earth, nor from any [Earthly?] means; Though men ought to do what they can, yet it shall be too great a Glory for any earthly means to be able to bring."

¹¹ Gildas Salvianus: The Reformed Pastor (ed. by John Wilkinson, London: The Epworth Press, 1955), p.110. Vide appendix article on Baxter's Presbyterianism.

¹² The Power of the Christ of God; etc. (London: 1641), "The Epistle Dedicatory", unpagged. Cf. Nathaniel Hardy, The Arraignment of Licentious Liberty, and Oppressing Tyranny. etc. (London: 1647), p.40, who told Parliament that they had the power

to bring in the kingdom age: "Be pleased then to consult in your wisdoms, a safe and speedy way for easing the Countrey of Quarters, and the Kingdom of Taxes: that our Swords may be turned into Plough-shares, and our Speares into Pruning-hooks, and every man may sit under his fig tree, and none make them afraid." Optimism was also expressed by John Arrowsmith, in his eschatological sermon on Rev. 12:1, 2, and entitled, A great Wonder in Heaven: or A Lively Picture of the Militant Church, Drawn by a divine Pencill. etc. (London: 1647). According to Arrowsmith, the woman in travail trying to bring forth a child meant that the militant church was about to be born. It is certain that the Presbyterians of the day no less than the Independents looked for the dawning of an age of peace, but whereas the former looked more to Parliament and to the Christian ministry to accomplish it, the latter based their hopes on the speedy personal return of Christ, this to be followed by the thousand year millenium.

13

The Progresse of Gods Providence. preached before the House of Peers, Sept. 24, 1645. (n.p.: n.d.), p. 28f. One of the recurring features in the Puritan eschatological emphasis is the doctrine of holiness as it related to the return of Christ. Gouge's sermon, *op. cit.*, p. 40, is an example of an orthodox Calvinist's attempt to maintain holiness and imminency from an a'millennial viewpoint: "we ... live in the later part of the last day (to which better things are reserved then in the former part). Therefore, we should endeavour to be better then all former." Gouge absolutely rejected chiliasm. Cf. Peter Sterry's sermon of Oct. 27, 1647, before the House of Commons, entitled, The Clouds in Which Christ Comes. etc. (London: 1648), p. 31, who presented the coming of Christ as a motive for holy living. Obadiah Sedgewicke wrote a lengthy sermon of 262 pages on Rev. 3:2, 2, designed to urge Christians to practical holiness in the light of the prophetic portions of the last book in the Bible. Vide his Christs Counsell to his languishing Church of Sardis. Or The dying or decaying Christian, with the meanes and helpes of his recovery and strengthening. (London: 1640). Samuel Rutherford wasn't a chiliast, but believed in imminency as a guide to holiness in connection with the Lord's Table. Vide his An Exhortation at a Communion to a Scots Congregation at London (Edinburgh: 1746), p. 9: "A little while, says Christ, and I will come again: Take you here Christ's Flesh in token that he will come again to you and marry you to himself for ever: Your new Husband hath said, within a little while he will come again and see you, and see that ye keep yourselves for him; abide in him." Although Calvin and his closest followers tended to push the coming of Christ far into the future, many (if not all) Puritan anti-chiliasts wanted to preserve the concept of imminency as a motive for holiness. This was probably one of the main reasons why some Presbyterians overlooked Independent chiliasm of a moderate nature. In the Westminster Assembly, there seems to have been no debate over chiliasm recorded by any of the primary documents. Holiness of life was of more concern to the Puritan than detailed orthodoxy in doctrine.

14

Geoffrey F. Nuttall, in his Visible Saints (London: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 143ff., alludes to the connection between millenarianism and the conversion of the Jews, but there were some who violently opposed chiliasm, but who also expected the regathering and conversion of the Jews. One of these was William Gouge, *op. cit.*, p. 29f., who listed the conversion and regathering of Israel as one of the things to which Christians could look forward. John Archer's The Personal Reign of Christ Upon Earth (London: 1643), p. 25, said that converted Israel would be a part of the Kingdom of Christ et Thomas Goodwin's A Sermon of the Fifth Monarchy. Proving by Invincible Arguments, That the Saints shall have a Kingdom here on Earth, which is yet to come, after the Fourth Monarchy is destroy'd by the Sword of the Saints,

the followers of the Lamb. etc. (London: 1654), p.19, averred that the Jews would be converted during the millenium. During Cromwell's governmental experiment, the problem of the Jews was a recurring one and Thomas Goodwin was one of the Protector's closest advisors on Jewish affairs. He served on a commission to consider Manasseh Ben Israel's petition to admit the Jews into England in Dec., 1655, and William Cortez Abbot, in his The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, vol. III...1945, vol. IV...1947), p.35, IV, is probably incorrect in saying that Cromwell's keenness to readmit the Jews was due primarily to monetary motives. Many of Oliver's religious advisors undoubtedly favored the readmission of the Jews on eschatological grounds alone, reasoning that since the last days were come, and the Jews were prophesied to be converted then, that England should take the lead as a Christian nation in bringing such an event to pass. The fact that some of the divines on this commission opposed the Jews' readmission is not strange when it is noted that Goodwin, Nye, and Caryl (all Independents and all chiliasts) championed the proposal. Vide Abbot, ibid., p. 52. Cf. David Masson, The Life of John Milton: etc. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1859-1894), p.71, V; et Nuttall, op. cit., p.146. One Biblical justification often used by Puritans attempting to give the Jews a new home in England is mentioned by Thomas Goodwin, in his A Glimpse of Zion's Glory; or, the Church's Beauty Specified. etc. (London: 1641), bound in the Works (1861 ed.), vol. XII, p.66: "the Gentiles are to provoke the Church of the Jews to come in, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, chap. 11.3, 5, 'Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.' Fifth verse, 'O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord;' the Gentiles calling upon the Jews to come in. So it shall be at the Jews' calling." Goodwin was enough of an authority on the subject of Israel's conversion, that John Tillingham was quoting his sermons on the subject. Vide Nuttall, Visible Saints, op. cit., p.153. Definitive treatment of Goodwin's influence on Cromwell's Jewish policies would be very difficult to accomplish and the task is not made easier by the fact that the "Transactions and Miscellanies Index Sessions 1893-1945", of The Jewish Historical Society of England (published by the University College, London), has not one single reference to Thomas Goodwin, although Cromwell is a favorite subject in the journal. It is certain that Goodwin's tolerance toward them was based on eschatological grounds, whereas Presbyterians who did not share his ideas of the "last days" were not so kindly disposed toward Israel. But if Presbyterians were intolerant of them, they were not so much so as was one of their predecessors. Vide Hastings Eells, "Bucer's Plan for the Jews", Church History, VI:2 (June, 1937), pp.127-135.

15

Much of the subsequent discussion of this great problem can be traced back to St. Augustine, who in his De Civitate Dei, XX:9, asserted that "the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven," as found in the Marcus Dods translation (New York: Random House, The Modern Library series, 1950), p.726. Augustine, then, was the author of the idea that the Church was a "Reigning Church". Cf. Lord Percy, The Heresy of Democracy (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1954), p.149, who discusses Augustine's view. The Puritans inherited all of Augustine's thought and the earlier reformers thrown in and in 1641, Milton was proclaiming that this kingdom would be ushered in by the soon coming of Christ. Vide his of Reformation in England (Bohn edition), pp.418, 419, II. But Puritans were not in agreement over the relationship between the Kingdom of Christ and the Church. Presbyterians equated them and Independents separated them. In the Westminster Assembly, Presbyterian views were often aired on the subject. One of the most remarkable speeches on this topic was made by Johnston of Warriston over the breach of privilege accusation by Parliament, when Presbytery was about to be set up in England: "Until King

Jesus be set down on his throne with his sceptre in his hand I do not expect God's peace, and so no solid peace from men in these kingdomes; but that soveraigne truth being established a durable peace will be found to follow..." "Christ lives and reigns alone over and in his Church..." "He is a king and hes a kingdome in the externall government of his church..." According to the Scottish commissioner, the Assembly was really deciding the extent of the Kingdom of Christ: "the Kingdome of Christ est quid optimum maximum, and to have it now under your debate, as it is the greatest honour God can bestow upon an assembly, so is it the greatest danger, for, according now as God shall assist you or desert you, ye may and will be the instruments of the greatest good or evil on earth." Vide Alexander F. Mitchell, The Westminster Assembly (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1883), pp. 314, 316, 317. The Presbyterians at the sederunt felt that they were appointed for the express purpose of defining and setting up the Kingdom of Christ in England. When they published their Directory, it set forth the aim of the presbyterian parochial system "that the whole land in the full extent of it may become the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ." Ibid., p. 265. Lazarus Seaman often championed Presbyterian views of the kingdom. On Feb. 12, 1644/5, he said that "the Church is the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and kingdom is a political word." Vide Alexander F. Mitchell et John Struthers (eds.), Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines etc. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), p. 56, sess. 379. On another occasion, he spoke to this end: "Whatsoever that kingdom of Israel was in the whole of it, it was a type of the kingdom of Christ. At the end all the governments of the worlds shall resolve themselves into the government and kingdom of Christ." Ibid., p. 440f., sess. 614, April 3, 1646. Thus, the Church was not only equal to Israel, but Seaman was putting Old Testament imagery on New Testament concepts which is one reason why Presbyterians connected the Church so closely with the civil power. It was the Kingdom of Christ and was to hold sway over all. Stephen Palmer preached on Zech. 3:6, 7, Oct. 8, 1645, and told the divines in the Assembly that "it is the command of God... that... the kingdom of Christ shall be set up; and hath not God sworn to set up the kingdom of Christ, and engaged His zeal to do it?" He was, of course, referring to the Presbyterian Church soon to be established in the nation. Vide the Minutes, op. cit., p. 146, sess. 514. S.W. Carruthers, in his The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian Historical Societies of England and America, 1943), p. 71, incorrectly gave the date of this event as Oct. 2, 1645.

Baxter remarked in his Gildas Salvianus: The Reformed Pastor (ed. by John Wilkinson, London: The Epworth Press, 1955), p. 135: "We are seeking to uphold the world, to save it from the curse of God, to perfect the creation, to attain the ends of Christ's redemption... to set up the Kingdom of Christ and help others to the kingdom of glory." Contrary to Presbyterian belief in an external political Kingdom of Christ (i.e. Presbyterian system of church government), Independents emphasized the internal spiritual aspects to the kingdom. They denied that men could set it up on earth through theological debate and Parliamentary decree. Henry Burton, A Vindication of Churches commonly called Independent: etc. (London: 1644), p. 60, spoke of "Christ's kingdome in the hearts of his people" as opposed to an ecclesiastico-political subordination of power. John Cotton, in his The True Constitution of a particular visible Church. proved by Scripture. etc. (London: 1642), p. 2, concurred with Burton: "the kingdome of Christ is not of this World, but Heavenly and spiritual." But in another of his writings, Cotton seems to make the point that "the Kingdome of Christ" may exist either "in the hearts of his servants" or "in the Church State, and all the Administrations thereof". Vide his The Doctrine of the Church, To which are committed the Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven. etc. (London: 1643, second edition), p. 13. His was a middle road between Presbyterian and Independent term-

inology. A comparison between Cotton's The Pwring out of the Seven Vials; or An Exposition of the Sixteenth Chapter of the Revelation. Preached in Sundry Sermons. (London: 1642/k645?), and several of Thomas Goodwin's eschatological sermons will show how radically different the two stalwarts of Independency were on the subject of the "last days." Cotton was much closer to Presbyterians than to his Congregational brethren in England. Du Moulin, the Presbyterian champion of Independency, denied that the church was the same as the kingdom of Christ. Vide Douglas Nobbs, Theocracy and Toleration (Cambridge: University press, 1938), p.225. Even Baxter, in his Reformed Pastor, op. cit., p.130n., in taking a side arm blow at Cromwell, practically conceded that the Independent emphasis was correct: "The actions of armies and famous commanders... cannot with all their victories exalt the Lord Jesus in the soul of any sinner, and therefore they cannot set up His spiritual Kingdom; for the hearts of men are His house and his throne." Calvin's view is set forth in his Psychopannychia, 79:212, as cited in Quistorp, op. cit., p.90: "The kingdom of God does not yet exist, not for the reason that it is not yet accomplished... The Kingdom of God is within you (Lk. 17:21). Already God reigns in the lives of His saints whom He guides by His spirit... But His kingdom will wholly appear when it is fulfilled and it will be fulfilled when the glory of His majesty is fully disclosed." The Quakers of Puritan times believed that the Kingdom of God was already come. Vide Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "Law and Liberty in Puritanism", Congregational Quarterly, XXIX:1 (Jan. 1951), p.26. The confusion of the Puritans about the question is scarcely less embarrassing than modern differences of opinion, but in the 1640's and 50's, the issue divided Presbyterians and Independents.

16 The passage of Scripture which gave rise to most of the Puritan date setting was Daniel's prophecy of the 1260 days. Stephen Marshall, A Two-edged Sword out of The Mouth of Babes, To Execute vengeance upon the Enemy and Avenger. etc. (London: 1646), p.20, mentions these 1260 years. Jeremiah Burroughes, in his Jerusalem's Glory, op. cit., p.77, is certain that anti-christ will reign for 1260 years, but is uncertain when this rule began. On the title page of the anonymous tract entitled, One Blow More at Babylon: etc. (London: 1650), there is a note in Latin about the year of its publication: "Anno Domini 1650. Qui Bonis Annus est magnae expectationis." The statement was based on an exegesis of Daniel's prophecy. Increase Mather also dabbled with the text in his A Sermon Shewing, That the present Dispensations of Providence declare, That wonderful Revolutions in the World are near at Hand; With an Appendix shewing some Scripture Grounds to hope, that within a few Years, glorious Prophecies and Promises will be fulfilled. (Edinburgh: 1713), p.13: "This happy blessed Day is near at hand; when the Man of sin shall be removed, then the Church of God shall see good Days, and that will be err long. He hath but twelve hundred and sixty Years allowed him to Reign in, and that time is almost Expired; I doubt not but that... more than 1200 of those Years are past." Mather calculated that in 1716 the Beast would no longer oppress the Church of God. Ibid., p.20f. Thomas Goodwin, in his "A Exposition of the Revelation", bound in the Works (1861 ed.), p.157f., III, gives several possible interpretations of Daniel 12:11, depending on how you started reckoning: (1) Vespasian (70 A.D.) plus 1290 equals 1359/6 which was the time of Wicliff and the dawn of the new light in England; (2) Julian (363 A.D.) plus 1290 equals 1655/6 which was the time the Jews were to be regathered; (3) Roman Bishop asserted self in 406/10 plus 1290 equals 1666 which was the date Goodwin set for the slaughter of the two witnesses. So far as we can discover, Thomas Goodwin never predicted the date of the coming of Christ or the end of the world. He did attempt to calculate dates for the regathering of the Jews and of the demise of the two Witnesses in Rev. 11. John Archer, The Personal Reign of Christ upon Earth (London, 1643), p.48,

calculated that the Jews would be converted in 1650/6 and that Christ would come to set up the kingdom in 1700. Baillie incorrectly says that Goodwin followed him in this. Vide his A Dissuasive from the Errours of the time. (London: 1646), p.241. Ralph Paul Bohn, "The Controversy Between Puritans and Quakers to 1660", (unpublished thesis presented to the Post-graduate School of Theology, University of Edinburgh, 1955), p.217f., oversimplifies the date of 1656 as set by the fifth monarchists for the coming of Christ. Many Puritans who spoke of 1656, were referring to the regathering of the Jews instead of the return of Christ.

One of the most embarrassing predictions of the century was the one made by John Archer et al. that Rome would be destroyed in 1666. In that year was the Great fire of London! Vide Archer, op. cit., pp.44, 50f.

Much of the Puritan speculation concerning the setting of dates for eschatological events, was directed toward the end of the world, but even such discretionary practice was often criticized. Some of those who were most studious in their farfetched calculations even criticized other dogmatic prophets who were their contemporaries. Increase Mather, op. cit., p.16, is a case in point: "We may safely upon Clear Scripture Grounds affirm that the morning of the grate Day of Judgment is near, but for any to fix on the particular Year, when that Day shall begin, is too much Boldness, and and Presumption." Stephen Marshall, in his The Right Understanding of the Times: etc. (London: 1647), p.7, is another: "Prophetically knowledge of the times, that is, such a knowledge, as wherein the Lord by revelation doth enable some of his servants, I meane of the Prophets, to know what shall afterwards come to passe; and this kinde of knowledge, though everyman hath an itch after it, and many doe as Nebuchadnezzar did, when his thoughts troubled him in the night, that hee might know what should come to passe afterwards; yet our Lord hath told us, That it is not for us thus to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath kept in his owne hand." William Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, etc. (London: n.d.), p.188, was equally cautious about the end of the world. "The day and yeare of it is not revealed in Scripture, and so may not be set downe by men." Peremptory prophesying was categorically condemned by Roger Williams, in his Queries of Highest Consideration Proposed to Mr. Tho. Goodwin, et al. (London: 1644), p.8: "Tis true, the Propheties are great concerning Christ and Antichrist throughout the Prophets and the Revelation, but can you sufficiently demonstrate these to the consciences of men? Are you those our Prophets which can tell us How Long? Psalm 74. Can you cleare up the mysteries of Daniels 2300 dayes, Dan.8. Daniels 7 weeks and 3 score and 2 weeks, his one week, and his halfe week, Dan.9? His time, times, and half a time, his 1290 dayes, and 1335 dayes, Dan.12? Can you unlocke those mysticall numbers of Johns 42 moneths, 1260 dayes; the 3 dayes and a halfe, Rev. 11.12. the time, times, and half a time, Rev.12. and the thousand yeare, Rev.20. with divers others, which may establish the Judgements and Consciencies of Men, and give them Warrant wherein to venture their Soules, and shed their Bloods, for the present destruction of Pope and Popery (not by the breath of Christs mouth and the Sword of the Spirit, but) by the breath of murdering Canons and a flaming Sword of steele?" Similar sentiments are found in Baillie's A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London: 1646), pp.237, 241: "It is good to be wise to sobriety: arrogant curiosity and presumptuous wantonnesse of wit is detestable, though in the best of men." "We marvell at the rashnesse of men who by the example of many before them, will not learne greater wisdom; if they needes must determine peremptorily of times and seasons, That they doe not extend their period beyond their owne dayes, That they be not, as some before them, laughed at before their owne Eyes, when they have lived to see the vanity of their too confident Predictions." An interestingly similar viewpoint is expressed by one of Dr. Thomas Goodwin's former students of Oxford. Vide The Whole Works of the Rev. John Howe, M. A. (ed. by John Hunt, London: F. Westley, 1822), pp.299-369, II, wherein is found the author's

"On Thoughtfulness for the Morrow" with an appendix concerning "The Immoderate Desire of Knowing Things to Come." In spite of the many Puritans who warned against setting dates, Goodwin was much further Left. Vide his A Sermon of the Fifth Monarchy etc. (London: 1654), "To the Reader", unpagged: "though the Saints know not what Christ will do next, yet they are guided (as it were) by a spirit of Prophecie, to seek for those very things which he is about to do." Probably, many of the Puritan critics of date setting remembered the Great Reformer's words of caution about anticipating the coming of Christ or the end of the age: "God intentionally hides from us this day so that we should not feel secure but constantly watch. (on Mt. 24:42)" "The day is near, looked at from God's point of view, for whom a thousand years are as a day. But we must await it with vigilance without calculating in advance any specific period (on II Pet. 3." It is seductive to assert that one knows in advance the day of redemption. Satan exploits the curiosity of folk in order to make them waver in faith afterwards. (on II Thess. 2:2)." "In regard to all those matters which lie hidden from us and far surpass the reach of human understanding we must either try to attain certainty through the clearly revealed word of God or entirely resign all such certainty. (Inst. III. 25:5):" All of these are cited from Quistorp, op. cit., pp. 26, 110, 113, 162.

¹⁷ This fact is recognized by several writers. Robert Barclay, The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1876), p. 486, observed that "there was not a denomination in which the idea of chiliasm did not exist." G. P. Gooch, The History of English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge: University press, second edition, 1927), p. 108, said that the doctrine lay "at the basis of the creed of every religious body of the time, except the Presbyterians." We shall see that some of the synodical brethren themselves had imbibed the teaching. Gooch is partly misleading in his statement. Gertrude Huehns, Antinomianism in English History with Special Reference to the Period 1640-1660 (London: Cresset Press, 1951), p. 130, notes that both antinomianism and chiliasm were interdenominational concepts. This author attempts to tie antinomianism to millenarianism (p. 128), but there were many millenarians such as Owen and Thomas Goodwin, who were violently opposed to antinomianism. Cf. chap. VIII, "The Last Attempt At Realization i.e. of Antinomianism : The Millenarians", p. 125ff., ibid. Allam Simpson, Puritanism in Old and New England (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 77, says that millenarianism "bedevils the politics of the Center as well as the Left of the Puritan movement," but unfortunately, he omitted the few on the Right.

¹⁸ Contrarywise, some Independents were not chiliasts.

¹⁹ Vide David Laing (ed.), The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, A. M. Principal of the University of Glasgow. M.D.C. XXXVII-M.D.C. LXII. (Edinburgh: printed for Robert Ogle, 1841), p. 313, II, letter to William Spang, Sept. 5, 1645. Edmund Calamy in 1643 was reported to have said that he hoped to see both Church and king pulled down, and such an outlook was certainly millenarian in tendency. Vide Gooch, op. cit., p. 105f., who cites this from Dugdale's Diary, p. 96. Confirmation of Stephen Marshall's views was given by Dorothy Osborne in her Letters, p. 190, who is also cited by Gooch, p. 147. Another leading Presbyterian spirit was John Dury, who seems to have had a hankering after millenarian ideas. He wrote an introduction to the anonymous tract, entitled, Clavis Apocalyptica: Or, A Prophetical Key: By which the Great Mysteries in the Revelation of St. John and the Prophet Daniel are opened: It being apparent that the Prophetical Numbers come to an end with the Year of our Lord, 1655. Written by a German D. and now translated out of High Dutch. (London: 1651). Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), p. 109n., says that this tract originally appeared in 1627 and was written by Joseph Mead. In 1643, it was translated into English as the key of the

Revelation by R. More. Nuttall cites the Dictionary of National Biography which avers that the book rejected a terrestrial reign of Christ. This, however, would not necessarily rule out a thousand year millenium, because some Puritans, like Thomas Goodwin, felt that Christ might rule the earth from heaven during the thousand years. If this is so, then Dury is still involved in chiliastic notions. Cf. Thomason Catalogue, p. 828, I, which accredits the translation of the tract from High Dutch to Samuel Hartlib.

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Vide e.g. William Gouge, The Progresse of Gods Providence (n.p.:n.d.), p. 29; G. Hughes, Vae-euge-Tuba. or The Wo-Joy-Trumpet, sounding the third and greatest woe in the Antichristian world, but the first and last joy to the Church of the Saints upon Christs exaltation over the Kingdomes of the World. etc. (London: 1647), p. 18; Charles Herle, The Independency on Scriptures of the Independency of Churches: etc. (London: 1643), p. 7; John Dury, A Model of Church Government (London: 1647), p. 31. Four years later, Dury had possibly changed his views, however; vide supra; J. M. Lloyd Thomas (ed.), The Autobiography of Richard Baxter (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., Everyman's Library, 1931), p. 121; George Bates et Thomas Skinner, The History of the Rise and Progress of the Civil Wars in England, from the Year 1625, to 1660. etc. (London: 1688), p. 71; David Pareus, A Commentary Upon the Divine Revelation of the Apostle and Evangelist Iohn... And specially some things upon the 20th Chapter are observed by the same Authour against the Millenaries. (Amsterdam: 1644); Ephraim Pagitt, Heresiography: or a Description of the heretickes and sectaries of these latter times. etc. (London: 1647), p. 132; David Masson, op. cit., p. 152, III, cites another criticism by Pagitt of the chiliasts; the anonymous author of Religiouns, Sects, Societies, and Factions, of the Cavaliers now in Armes against Parliament. (n.p.: 1644), title page, criticizes the chiliasts for support of the king which was certainly far-fetched. Although there was no debate in the Westminster Assembly about Chiliasm, yet Lightfoot's Journal, op. cit., p. 301, August 8, 1644, reported a business of a millenarian preacher in the Isle of Guernsey, who was preaching that in 1655, "a perfect reformation" should occur. The Assembly voted to recommend to Parliament that he be imprisoned and sent to London. Neither Lightfoot nor Gillespie records any debate on the issue, which is strange in the light of Goodwin's previous history. Baillie's Dissuasive, p. 238, speaks of three great chiliasts: Archer, Mattoun, and Goodwin all Independents. Alexander Petrie (1594-1662) published in Rotterdam (1644) a pamphlet called "Chiliasto Mastix, or the Prophecies in the Old and New Testament concerning the Kingdom of our Saviour Jesus Christ vindicated from the Misinterpretation of the Millenaries, and specially of Mr. Robert Maton Mattoun". Robert Maton's important book was published in 1642, "Israel's Redemption or the Prophetical History of our Saviour's Kingdom on Earth". In 1646 he answered Petrie's tract. Another Presbyterian writer against the chiliasts was Thomas Hyne (1582-1645) who published "Christ's Kingdom on Earth, opened according to the Scriptures... an examination of Th. Brightman, J. Alsted, I. Mede, H. Archer, Glimpse of Zion's Glory." (London: 1645). One of the more complete denunciations of millenarianism came from the pen of Robert Baillie and is recorded in his Dissuasive, op. cit., p. 226ff, who traces the main stream of chiliastic thinking from Cerinthus to Papias, thence to Augustine, the Anabaptists, Alstedius, Piscator, Mr. Meade of Cambridge, John Archer, Thomas Goodwin, and finally to Jeremiah Burroughs. According to Baillie, Goodwin borrowed his ideas from Archer, but Goodwin's sermons on the Revelation were preached two years before Archer's book, The Personal Reign of Christ Upon Earth, came out. Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, in his The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), p. 109, believes that Archer's book first appeared in 1642, but the McAlpin Catalogue, p. 28, vol. V., says that it appeared in 1641, two more editions in 1642, one in 1643, and one in 1661. The indications are that Archer borrowed

from Goodwin instead of vice versa. Baillie, himself, was certainly not averse to borrowing arguments against the chiliasts from the Great Reformer. Many of the Scot's nine reasons against the millennial reign of Christ came directly from the pages of John Calvin. Cf. Quistorp, op. cit., p.158ff, who outlines Calvin's viewpoint.

²¹ E.g. John Vicars, The Schismatick Sifted. Or, the Picture of Independents, Freshly and Fairly Washt-over again. etc. (London: 1646). Obadiah Sedgwick, in his The Nature and Danger of Heresies, etc. (London: 1647), p. 32ff., listed eighteen of what he considered the more dangerous errors of the day and significantly omitted chiliasm.

²² There is a list of some of these in Geoffrey F. Nuttall's Visible Saints (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p.148. "Among the Congregational men," says Dr. Nuttall, "a degree of millenarianism was common." Ibid., p.146. But if it was common, it was by no means universal. In his sermon to the House of Commons, Oct. 27, 1647, entitled, The Clouds in Which Christ Comes (London: 1648), Peter Sterry made no mention of chiliasm or millenarianism in the entire 56 pages. Independents had to part company with their great champion, William Ames on the issue, too, a source of no little embarrassment. In the Marrow, op. cit., p.186, chap. XLI, "To the end of the World", Ames gives his eschatological convictions: one great consummation of all things, two resurrections, the final judgment, rewards, Christ ruling ever after, . . . and all of it happening at once with no millenium mentioned. John Goodwin was also opposed to the millenarian tendencies of his brethren. Vide Nuttall, Visible Saints, op. cit., p.148.

Typical of the Independent position was Henry Vane's, The Retired Mans Meditations, or the Myserie and Power of Godlines Shining forth in the Living Word, to the Myserie of Iniquity in the most Refined and Purest Forms. etc. (London: 1655). Two chaps. are especially interesting: chap. XVII, pp.212-232, entitled "Christ's Rule in the Evangelical conscience, Shewing the nature of that kingdom and Rule of Christ in the Saints, which consists not in word and in the form of godliness only, but in power, and in the life of saving faith, the first fruits whereof appear in those hearts that are made conformable to Christ in his death."; et chap. XXVI, pp.403-428, entitled, "Treating of the time of the manifestation of the sonnes of God, their sitting with Christ on his Throne, ruling and influencing all things on earth, during the space of a thousand years." Cf. pp.391, 392, on chiliasm.

²³ Vide The Principles of Faith, presented by Mr. Tho. Goodwin, Mr. Nye, Mr. Sydrach Simpson and other Ministers to the Committee of Parliament for Religion (n.p.: n.d.). In contrast, both Irenaeus and Justin Martyr held that the doctrine of the millennium was a necessary article of faith, which fact was pointed out by William Chillingworth, in his famous book, The Religion of Protestants A Safe Way To Salvation (London: Henry G. Bohn edition, 1846), p.39. The Westminster Assembly itself had some chiliasts and some antichiliasts and in their confession of faith, the matter of eschatology was penned in very general terms so as not to exclude either faction. Cf. chaps. XXXII et XXXIII especially. Significantly, the Independents' Savoy Declaration did not change the sections on eschatology radically although there were probably a greater number of chiliasts present at Savoy than at Westminster.

²⁴ According to Alexander Ross's TANZEBEIA: or A View of all Religions in the World: etc. (n.p.: fourth edition, 1672), p.370f., the church in Arnheim expected Christ to come within five years which had already expired when Ross wrote. Furthermore, the same author classified the religion of Arnheim separately from the Brownists, Familists, Arminians, Antinomians, etc., but nonetheless heretical

since they supposedly held that Independency was the beginning of Christ's temporal reign on the earth. Georgius Hornius, in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (M. Leydecker editit., 1687), p. 436, wrote: "Arnhemenses Independentes praecipue de sua perfectione gloriabantur, cum tamen crassi Chiliastae sint." This same reference (or another very similar) is given by Geoffrey F. Nuttall in his *Visible Saints* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 148, citing Hornius. But Nuttall's reference is to p. 269 rather than 436. Either there was more than one edition of this work or Dr. Nuttall's page reference is in error.

²⁵In his sermon entitled, "The World to Come; or, the Kingdom of Christ Asserted" (*Works*, 1861 ed.), first lecture, vol. XII, p. 83, Thomas Goodwin seemed to renounce the use of force in setting up the kingdom in this world. Only worldly men would use such carnal means of attaining power. Nevertheless, Goodwin and his sermons were widely used by the Fifth Monarchists to support their cause. Louise Fargo Brown, in her *The Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men in England During the Interregnum*. (Washington: published by the American Historical Association, 1912), pp. 16n, 225, alludes to the publishing by the Fifth Monarchist of three of Goodwin's sermons preached several years previously. These were Goodwin's "A Sermon on the Fifth Monarchy" (London: Sept. 22, 1654) and "The World to Come" (London: May 15th, 1655), mentioned supra. Dr. Brown points out, that Goodwin and John Owen eventually published a letter "giving up the cause" of some extremists in a series of meetings in Allhollows the Great in Thames Street. Vide Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 46. The letter came out after Powell and Feake had been arrested for their fanatical actions. Oliver Cromwell's kingship offer was opposed by Owen and Nye, but evidently not by Thomas Goodwin. Vide Robert S. Paul, *The Lord Protector: Religion and Politics in the Life of Oliver Cromwell* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1955), p. 371. This indicated that Goodwin became disenchanted with the Fifth Monarchy ideas sooner than some of his contemporaries. Dr. Nuttall *Visible Saints*, *op. cit.*, p. 154, believes that Owen lost favor with Oliver because of his refusal to sanction the kingship offer. Conversely, this would explain Goodwin's rise in prestige with the Protector in the last three years of the latter's life. Baxter's *Reliquiae Baxterianae*: etc. (London: 1696), p. 101, Lib. I, Part I, says that Owen was still active in Fifth Monarchy circles under Richard Cromwell and that the onetime Oxford vice-chancellor gathered a church in Lieutenant General Fleetwood's quarters. Certainly Goodwin was not engaged in such things. After the Restoration, and Venner's abortive revolt, Goodwin and twenty-five other Congregationalists in London signed a declaration against such Fifth Monarchy extremes. Cf. Nuttall, *Visible Saints*, *op. cit.*, p. 147; David Masson, *The Life of John Milton*: etc. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1859-1894), p. 121, VI; et G. P. Gooch, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: University Press, 1927), p. 274. The name of John Owen is conspicuously missing from the list of signers and one doubts that William Orme's explanation is really factual, i. e. that Owen was out of town in the country at the signing of the document. Vide William Orme's *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Religious Connexions, of John Owen*, etc. (London: T. Hamilton, 1820), p. 289. Goodwin, not Owen, seemed to be the Independent leader who tried to lead his party away from the eschatological extremes of the mid-seventeenth century.

²⁶Rogers was the recognized penman of the Fifth Monarchy party, an Anglican, turned Presbyterian, and later converted to the chiliastic sect. Gooch, *op. cit.*, p. 221, makes no connection between Rogers and Goodwin and there are no references to Rogers in the Index volume of Goodwin's *Works* which we have found.

²⁷Vide Gooch, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

²⁸Thomas Goodwin's doctrine of the last days is summed up in Robert Baillie's

A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London: 1646), p. 225, where it is stated that the former believed in (1) a premillennial return of Christ; (2) a resurrection of both Old and New Testament saints together; (3) the regathering of the Jewish Nation; (4) a reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years; (5) at the end of which reign, all heathen and Turkish nations were to make war against the New Jerusalem; (6) a second resurrection at the end of the millennium when all the bad would be raised up to face judgment. Probably, the most controversial document relating to Thomas Goodwin's eschatology is a tract entitled, A Glimpse of Zion's Glory; or, The Church's Beauty Specified. Briefly layd open in a Sermon, at a general Fastday in Holland. (London: 1641). The question concerns its authorship. Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), p. 110, has a lengthy discussion of the authorship problem. It has been attributed to Hanserd Knollys by A. Gordon in the D. N. B. and by A. S. P. Woodhouse; to William Kiffin by W. T. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 11, no. 22-641; to Kiffin also by J. Smith, Bibliotheca Anti-Quakeriana; to Kiffin by A. Gordon in D. N. B.; to Jeremiah Burroughs by H. M. Dexter, bibliographical appendix, no. 736 (all of these are given in Nuttall). Allan Simpson, Puritanism in Old and New England (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1955), p. 66, cites the Glimpse without mentioning the author, but on p. 76, Simpson refers to the author as a separatist, which means that Simpson is convinced that Goodwin was not the author. William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism etc. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 396f. also has a lengthy discussion of the authorship problem including a list of all the catalogues attributing it to William Kiffin, but Haller himself believes that Hanserd Knollys wrote it. Kiffin's claim is based primarily on the fact that the "Epistle to the Reader" which precedes the Glimpse was signed "W. K." We take issue with all of these modern writers, because we believe that Thomas Goodwin actually wrote the Glimpse of Zion's Glory. Our reasons are as follows: (1) Jeremiah Burroughs is said to have copied several eschatological ideas from the tract. Vide Baillie's Dissuasive, op. cit., pp. 238, 251. It is more likely that Burroughs would have been influenced by Thomas Goodwin, a close associate during the years in Holland and subsequently in the Westminster Assembly and who later published Burroughs' works, than that he was influenced by a separatist writer of the Baptist school such as Kiffin or Knollys. (2) The compilers of Thomas Goodwin's Works (1861 ed.) included it in his twelve volumes of remains. (3) The only contemporary evidence of authorship is Robert Baillie's Dissuasive, op. cit., p. 79: "The Glimpse of Sions glory Preached at a Fast in Holland by T. G. (which commonly report without contradiction that I have heard to be Thomas Goodwin). . . ." Baillie implied that others with whom he had talked attributed the tract to Goodwin. Haller, in his Rise of Puritanism, op. cit., p. 397, attempts to explain away Baillie's remark by saying that he "was eager to discredit his independent opponents." Dr. Nuttall, too, puts little stock in Baillie's statement. Vide reference, supra. No author whom we have read has given any convincing refutation of Baillie's remark, nor has any modern author produced any other contemporary evidence to support any of the other possible names. Robert Baillie is the only seventeenth century author yet discovered by us to shed light on this issue. (4) Furthermore, those who would attribute the Glimpse to Kiffin, or to Knollys, the two most prominent possibilities, must also prove that their candidate was in Holland at the time of the supposed authorship or else explain away the title page. Goodwin qualifies in this respect, and some others do not. (5) Internal evidence is strongly in favor of Goodwin. For instance, the author often referred to the common people as did Goodwin in his celebrated sermon The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms. Cf. Simpson, op. cit., p. 77. Goodwin contended that the Independent government of churches was one of the strongest defences against anti-christ. Vide pp. 62, 69, of the Glimpse (Goodwin's Works, 1861 ed.). Furthermore, the Glimpse, op. cit., p. 70, says of Christ: "He shall reign, first personally; secondly, in his saints." Cf. Goodwin's Of the Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the

Rev.15:3. so in and over his Saints peculiarly, and that not in their Hearts only; but outwardly and visibly in an ordered instituted Kingdom." Cf. again the Glimpse, op. cit., p.69: "the less Christ doth reign outwardly in the world, the less gloriously his kingdom doth appear outwardly, the more let us labour to bring our hearts under his spiritual reign."

²⁹ Thomas Goodwin, A Sermon of the Fifth Monarchy. eit. (London: 1645), p.18.

³⁰ Ibid., p.3.

³¹ Ibid., p.4.

³² Ibid., p.10f. Cf. Goodwin's The Great Interest of States and Kingdomes etc (London: 1645), Works (1861 ed.), p.53, XII, who spoke often of the rule of the saints through prayer: "They are privy councillors to the great King of kings, who govern all the states and kingdoms in the world, and God doth give these his saints a commission to set up and pull down by their prayers and intercessions." Calvin used a similar idea to refute the chiliasts a century before: "The preaching of the gospel is already a disclosure of the Kingdom of Christ" and since the saints are therefore already judging the world by preaching, they do not require a thousand year millenium. Vide Calvin on Mt. 19:28, C.R. 73, 545, as cited in Heinrich Quistorp, Calvin's Doctrine of the Last Things (tr. by Harold Knight, London: Lutterworth Press, 1955), p.152.

³³ Sermon of the Fifth Monarchy, op. cit., p.10f.

³⁴ Ibid., p.11.

³⁵ Ibid., p.14. Cf. Goodwin's sermon, The World to Come; or, the Kingdom of Christ Asserted. (Works, 1861 ed.), p.97, XII, for another passage about Satan's being bound during the earthly reign of Christ.

³⁶ Sermon of the Fifth Monarchy, op. cit., p.14.

³⁷ The World to Come, op. cit., p.96.

³⁸ The only internal reason which we have discovered which might indicate that Thomas Goodwin did not write the Glimpse of Zion's Glory is this peculiar view of Christ's ruling the earth during the millenium from heaven. Cf. the Glimpse, op. cit., p.70: "He shall reign upon the earth, here in this world." According to Dr. Nuttall, in his Holy Spirit, op. cit., p109n., who cites the D.N.B., even the Clavis Apocalyptica: Or, A Prophetical Key: By which the Great Mysteries in the Revelation of St. John and the Prophet Daniel are opened; It being made apparent that the Prophetical Numbers come to an end with the Year of our Lord, 1655. etc. (London: 1651), did not champion a terrestrial reign of Christ. There were evidently many Puritan chiliasts who held to a thousand year reign of the saints with an absent Lord still in heaven. But Goodwin's views may well have changed in the fifteen years between the Glimpse and the sermons he preached during the Cromwellian era. It is not conclusive to urge this seeming discrepancy in order to disprove the proposed Goodwin authorship of the first named tract.

³⁹ Two Speeches delivered before the subscribing of the Covenant, the 25. of September, at St. Margarets in Westminster. The One By Mr. Philip Nave. The Other by Mr. Alexander Henderson. (Edinburgh: 1643), p.5.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.7.

⁴¹Ibid., p.14. Interestingly enough, the Westminster Confession of Faith ended the same way.

⁴²Cf. William Barlet, IXNOTPAΦIA or a Model of the Primitive Congregational way: etc. (London: 1647), p.78ff., Chap. IV, entitled, "That this Church-state with the Officers, Ordinances, and administration thereunto appertaining, is of perpetuall use, to the comming again of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..."

⁴³There were several books on the Revelation published before and during Thomas Goodwin's life time which he could have used in his own complicated exposition of the last book in the Bible. R.H. Charles, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John. etc. (Edinburgh: The International Critical Commentary Series, T. & T. Clark, 1920), p.cxxxviii, I, gives a tremendous list of commentaries written since the Reformation, fourteen of the most important ones produced before Goodwin died in 1680, and even Charles fails to mention Pareus and Durham. James Durham's A Commentary Upon the Book of the Revelation. etc. (Edinburgh: 1658) was considered a classic by many. William Haller especially commends three books on prophecy: Johann Heinrich Alsted's Diatribes de mille annis (1627), William Mede's Clavis Apocalyptica (1627), and Thomas Brightman's Apocalypsis Apocalypseos (1609). Vide Haller's Rise of Puritanism, op. cit., p.269. The last named author of the three, i.e. Thomas Brightman, was perhaps the most widely read eschatological writer of the century. References to his work appear everywhere. Increase Mather, A Sermon Shewing, That the present Dispensations of Providence declare, That wonderful Revolutions in the World are near at Hand; With an Appendix, shewing some Scripture Grounds to hope, that within a few Years, glorious Prophecies and Promises will be fulfilled. (Edinburgh: 1713), p.16, defended Brightman against the Jesuits. William Strong, A Voice from Heaven, calling The People of God to a Perfect Separation from Mystical Babylon. etc. (London: 1654), p.2, refers to Brightman. The preface to Thomas Hooker's A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline etc. (London: 1648) cites him. In at least two of his books, Samuel Rutherford speaks kindly of "Prophetical Brightman". Vide the A Peaceable and Temperate Plea For Pauls Presbyterie In Scotland. etc. (London: 1642), p.242; et A Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist. etc. (London: 1648), "Epistle", unpagged. Alexander Henderson, in his The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh: 1690 edition), unpagged epistle, once referred to Brightman as "our countryman" in a commendatory fashion. Richard Baxter's A Christian Directory: etc. (London: 1678), p.198, Part III, recommended Brightman's commentaries for the "Poor Mans Library", which was Baxter's highest classification. In the Westminster Assembly, Stephen Marshall once read a report from the Scottish Commissioners setting themselves forth as examples for England to follow in church affairs and backing their whole argument up with a quotation from Brightman's Apocalypse, chap.37. Vide Lightfoot's The Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines etc. (ed. by John Rogers Pitman, Works London: 1824), p.51, XIII, Nov. 14, 1643. The Apologeticall Narration etc. (London: 1643), p.5, honored Brightman. Cf. a Cool Conference Betweene the Scottish Commissioners Cleardd Reformation, and the Holland Ministers Apologeticall Narration, brought together by a well-willer to both. (London: 1644), p.5. William Ames, in his preface to William Bradshaw's English Puritanism etc. (n.p.: 1660), unpagged, wrote: "that famous Brightman, not unworthy of that splendid name". William Nicholson, a member of the Westminster Assembly, and author of An Apology for the Discipline of the Ancient Church: etc. (London: 1659), p.37f. quoted Brightman on the interpretation of the four beasts in Revelation. Thomas Goodwin, in his Government of Churches, op. cit., p89, also cited Brightman's book on the Revelation. The full title of the work by Brightman was A Revelation of the Apocalyps of S. Iohn Illustrated with an Analysis et Scolions; Where the sense is opened by the scripture. and the events of

Things foretold, shewed by Histories. etc. (Amsterdam: 1611). Early in the 1640's, a versified form of Brightman's Predictions and Prophecies was also published. Vide James D. Ogilvie, "Church Union in 1641", Records of the Scottish Church History Society, vol. I, Pt. III, p.144. In this tract, Brightman foretold the fall of the Bishops with the help of the Scottish Kirk, a fact later used by the Scots in the Westminster Assembly. Vide supra. Thomas Goodwin's Glimpse of Zion's Glory, op. cit., p. 78, relied on Brightman for its interpretation of Daniel's 1290 days and much of the subsequent date setting is due to Brightman's influence: "The light that I have from this, I acknowledge to be from that worthy instrument of God Mr. Brightman." Jeremiah Burroughes, Jerusalem's Glory Breaking forth into the World Being a Scripture-Discovery of the New Testament Church, In the Latter Days Immediately before the Second Coming of Christ (n.p.: 1675), p.8, uses Brightman to interpret Daniel's 42 weeks. On the other hand, there were many eschatological sermons preached in the seventeenth century which were not influenced by Thomas Brightman (at least not openly). Obadiah Sedgwick, Christ's Counsell to his languishing Church of Sardis. etc. (London: 1640); Peter Sterry, The Clouds in Which Christ Comes. etc. (London: 1648); John Arrowsmith, A great Wonder in Heaven: etc. (London: 1647); none of these quote from Brightman at all. Neither does William Twisse use him in the former's The Doubting conscience Resolved. etc. (London: 1652), p. 85f., even though Twisse attempts to explain many obscure passages in the Book of the Revelation. But in spite of the many who did not refer to any of Thomas Brightman's prophetic writings, he was still one of the most influential thinkers on eschatological questions of the century. There is a discussion of an attack against Brightman by a Frenchman, Jean de l'Ecluse, in an article entitled, "A Rare Separatist Pamphlet", Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society, VI (1913-1915), p. 251.

⁴⁴ Thomas Goodwin, Works (1861 ed.), An Exposition of the Revelation, p.140, Part II, Chap. IV, vol. III.

⁴⁵ Vide supra on the subordination of synods. Henry Burton, in his A Vindication of Churches commonly called Independent: etc. (London: 1644), p.23, pointed out that the Romanists used subordination in order to seize control. This eventuality was also feared by Thomas Goodwin in his Of the Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ, Works (1696 ed.), p.282, IV.

⁴⁶ The Divine Right of Church Government (Paisley edition: 1799; originally published in London, 1646), p.260. A surprising feature of Richard Vines's sermon, entitled, The Authours, Nature, and Danger of Haeresie. etc. (London: 1647), p.54, is that he quotes several eschatological passages from the book of Revelation, but does not connect false teacher with the signs of the last days as others had.

⁴⁷ Calvin would have agreed with the emphasis made by the London ministers. Vide Quistorp, op. cit., p.117, who cites the reformer on I Jn. 2:18: "It is as though he said: when all sorts of heresies emerge you must not allow yourselves to be horrified but rather aroused to greater attention. For from all that you should conclude that Christ is no longer remote."

⁴⁸ Vide the second part of Bastwick's Independency Postscript, p.37, as cited by Robert Baillie in his A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London: 1646), p.95.

⁴⁹ English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century (second edition by H. J. Laski, Cambridge University Press, 1927), p.297. Presbyterians were in keeping with Calvin's "long wait theory" by stamping out heresy. By eliminating error and

those who held it, they could be ready and pure if Christ came, but they could also push His coming farther into the future by doing away with one of the prerequisites of His appearing, i. e. an apostasy of the Churches. Thus, they secured more time to apply the gospel to history and to the lives of men. Cf. Quistorp, op. cit., p. 117.

⁵⁰ Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches tr. by Olive Wyon, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), p. 656, discusses the influence of Free Church eschatology on its doctrine of toleration. A remarkably similar idea is found in William Chillingworth's The Religion of Protestants A Safe Way to Heaven (London: Henry G. Bohn edition, 1846), p. 121.

⁵¹ Lord Percy, The Heresy of Democracy (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1954), p. 152, sees a connection between democracy and eschatology. G. Von Schulze Gaevernitz, Democracy and Religion: A Study in Quakerism (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1930), p. 25, traces a development of modern socialism from the Commonwealth millenarianism. One fact, in determining the eschatological basis (if any) in democracy was the number of the elect. Calvin believed that the non-elect were in the minority and that saints should therefore rule. Vide Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Church (tr. by Olive Wyon, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1931), p. 659. Contrarywise, Thomas Goodwin believed that only a few are truly elect and the saints will never outnumber the non-elect. Vide John Stoughton, Ecclesiastical History of England: The Church of Restoration (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1870), p. 399, II. Cf. Goodwin's Great Interest, op. cit., p. 57, on the number of the saints.

⁵² Baillie, in his Dissuasive, op. cit., p. 246, criticized Thomas Goodwin because of his literalism in the latter's eschatological interpretation of certain obscure Scriptural passages. John Archer, in his The Personal Reign of Christ Upon Earth (London: 1643), p. 38, also spoke of literalness.

Sir Henry Vane, in his The Retired Mans Meditation, or the Myserie and Power of Godlines Shining forth in the Living Word, to the unmasking the Myserie of Iniquity In the most Refined and Purest Forms. etc. (London: 1655), epistle "To the Reader", unpagged, went to the opposite extreme. Vane, although and Independent, felt that too many writers aimed at a "literal and historical" sense of Scripture; and too few at the "inward and spiritual". His mystical tendencies therefore favored the Presbyterian allegorizing more than the Independents' literal method. Quistorp, op. cit., pp. 115, 116, 160, 194, et passim, shows how Calvin feared apocalypticism so much that it drove him to an habitual spiritualizing, minimizing, practice of hermeneutics. Quistorp, shows clearly that Calvin did not do full justice to the Bible in his eschatology, because he refused to admit any literal sense in passages dealing with the last things. For an older criticism of literalism there is an article entitled, "Theories on the Millenium", in The Congregationalist, II (1873), p. 665ff.

⁵³ Vide supra, chap. on Progressive Interpretation of Scripture.

⁵⁴ A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline. etc. (London: 1648), "The Preface", unpagged.

⁵⁵ Loc. cit.

⁵⁶ Ibid., "The Epistle to the Reader", unpagged, written by Edward Hopkins and William Goodwin, written from Hartford, Conn., Oct. 28, 1647. Cf. Henry Vane's words, op. cit., "To the Reader", unpagged: "If the newness of many things thou

meetest with, offend thee, consider with thy self what unsearchable riches are to be found in the Word of God, whose best wine is kept for the last."

⁵⁷Zeale for Gods House Quickened: etc. (London: 1643), "The Epistle Dedicatory", unpagcd.

⁵⁸The Doubting Conscience Resolved. etc. (London: 1652), "A Perplexing Question", unpagcd.

⁵⁹Thomas Goodwin, The World to Come; op. cit., p.95, second lecture, Cf. Glimpse of Zion's Glory, op. cit., p.76: "Dissensions in any one congregation are evil; for one church to dissent from another is a grievous evil. Blessed will the time be when all dissensions shall be perfect union of all, and not any distinction of Calvinists or Lutherans, or the like; but all shall come and serve God, and be called by one name." "There shall be most blessed union of all the churches of the world in the millenium."

⁶⁰Thomas Goodwin, Christ the Universal Peacemaker: etc. (London: 1651), p.2.

⁶¹Loc. cit. Italics mine.

⁶²Ibid., p.2f. Cf. his Great Interest of States and Kingdoms, op. cit., p.59.

⁶³Vide his Irenicum, etc. (London: 1646), p.249.

⁶⁴Albert Peel (ed.), The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, 1658 (London: Independent Press, 1939), p.62, chap. XXVI of Savoy (chap. XXV of Westminster Assembly), sect. V added by the Independents. Even the indefatigable John Dury, in his Epistolary Discourse to Tho. Goodwin, etc. (London: 1644), p.12, contended that peace and unity in Protestantism "is a most ample and large subject to be insisted upon towards those that believe the Raising up of the Kingdome of Christ, and the Overthrow of Babylon in the latter times." Dury almost always interpreted his ecumenical activity in an eschatological context of the "last times".

**Part 3....Ecclesiological Differences: the Result of Applying
Eschatology to Hermeneutics (Chaps. IX-XIII)**

CHAPTER IX

THE CONCEPT OF THE MINISTRY IN RELATION TO THE PRESBYTERIAN-INDEPENDENT CONTROVERSY

No deeper conviction grasped the Puritan conscience than the need for a godly, and duly qualified ministry, but divergent concepts of the ministry presented a stage upon which a further act in the Presbyterian-Independent drama unfolded.

Inside the Westminster Assembly, the divines agreed that ministers of the Gospel should have a certain degree of knowledge¹ prior to ordination, but disagreed over other qualifications.² All agreed that the need for godly ministers was great:

And let your Gentleness hear me, and bear with me, but in one thing more, and I have done; and that is, That you would speedily proceed to the thorough purging... of the corrupt... Ministry of this Nation, ... You know such men can never act for God, nor the good of this Commonwealth, till a change be made in their Principles; and when that will be, God alone (who is the great Heart-Former and Reformer) knows. Its the grief of your best Friends, to behold how the glory of God is neglected, Don't you see what snares of Death and Hell do yet encompass poor Englands Peoples Souls? Oh that your bowels might yearn towards them, and provoke you to arise speedily to the breaking of them! And how can this be done, but by removing of those Idol Shepherds that are yet over them?³

Puritans deprecated the existing Anglican ministry, but could not agree on who should replace them.⁴

SECTION A: DERIVATION OF POWER FROM CHRIST TO THE MINISTRY

Many differences existed between Presbyterians and Independents concerning the ministry of the Church, but one of the most persistent problems involved the transmission of power from Christ to the Church.

Both the Westminster Confession⁵ and the Savoy Declaration (which changed nothing here except for the addition of a few phrases)⁶ stated implicitly that Christ was the head of His Church. Hetherington was absolutely right when he adverted to the central idea of the Westminster Assembly; "Christ, who is prophet, priest, king, and head of the Church, hath fulness of power, and contained all other offices by way of eminence in himself."⁷ But how was this power to be transferred from Christ to the Church? Here, there was no agreement. The Erastians maintained that Christ delegated power to the civil magistrate; the Independents wanted the power to descend to the congregation itself; and the Presbyterians insisted that Christ delegates His power only to the eldership or the officers in the church.

The London ministers wrote that "Jesus Christ, our Mediator, hath all authority and power in Heaven and in earth, for the government of his church, committed unto him from God the Father."⁸ Lord Warriston, in his famous speech before the Assembly disagreeing with the Erastian Parliament, emphasized the "Lordship of Christ over the Church."⁹

Independents agreed wholeheartedly with the Presbyterians. "A right Reformation," declared Henry Burton, "is a setting up of Christs spirituall kingdome, first over the hearts and consciences, and then over the severall Churches."¹⁰ But their argument with the Presbyterians concerned the immediacy of Christ over the Churches.¹¹

Every particular church... is under Christ, as the only Head, King, Governor, Lawgiver of it; and so is subject to no other jurisdiction than that of Christ, his Spirit, his Word.¹²

Congregationalists believed that Christ was to rule and reign in each particular church. He would not reign "while officials governed; He both governed and

reigned."¹³ "Each congregation is an entire and independent body-politic, and indued with power immediately under and from Christ, as every proper Church is and ought to be".¹⁴

The urgency of receiving Christ immediately did not cause Congregationalists to disparage the Christian ministry. John Cotton is typical:

Though the office of a Pastor in generall be immediately from Christ, and the authority from him also, yet the application of this office, and of this authoritie to this elect person, is by the Church; and therefore the Church hath sufficient and just warrant, as to elect and call a Presbyter unto office, so to ordaine him to it, by imposition of hands.¹⁵

Presbyterians emphasized "immediacy" of the ministry with Christ apart from the work of the people. "Christ Jesus hath immediately himselfe without the intervening power of the Church or men, appointed offices and officers in his house."¹⁶ The problem was not so much whether the ministry came down from God or up from the people, but that it came from God in both cases. Presbyterian Puritan, and Congregational Puritan recognized that, but they disagreed over the means of accrediting the ministry which did come from God. Apollonius of Middleburgh had an erroneous opinion of true Congregationalism:

The multitude of Beleevers in the Church hath not by the Word of God a power of ruling and judging Church affaires by a spirituall jurisdiction, and therefore cannot delegate it to the Elders and Presbyters: But the Presbyters doe themselves immediately from Christ the King of the Church receive power of ruling and Ecclesiasticall jurisdiction.¹⁷

The soul's immediate relation to Christ was insisted upon by both groups, but with different results. One interpreted his immediacy under the aegis of order; the other of liberty.

If Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye could write that "whatever power or right any of the Possessours and subjects thereof may have [i. e. in a particular church] , they have it each, alike immediately from Christ",¹⁸ then George Gillespie could also write that:

the strait union betwixt Christ and the Church... cannot bee understood of the Church taken politically: for then the union

betwixt Christ and the Church might be dissolved as often as the Church ceaseth to bee ordered and governed as an Ecclesiasticall Republic.¹⁹

Presbyterians wanted immediacy but they tended to separate Christ reigning in the hearts of believers and Christ reigning externally over the Church. Gillespie makes this clear as does Robert Baillie:

The high and excellent stiles of honour which the Scripture gives not onely to whole Churches but to every particular Saint, exempts neither the one nor the other because of their immediate subjection to God and Christ, from the bonds and yooke of any authority, either Ecclesiasticke or Civill, which the Lord hath appointed in Holy Scripture. Christs internall government of soules by his Spirit albeit never so immediate, taketh not away the externall administration of men either in Church or Commonwealth.²⁰

Such a dichotomy between external and internal government was more often made in the Presbyterian mind than in the Independent, and by making this division, the Presbyterians made room for a doctrine of the ministry which seemed to lessen the place of the people in ecclesiastical affairs.

In voicing his opinion concerning the Lordship of Christ, Thomas Goodwin echoed the voices of other Congregationalists:

as Jesus Christ is the King of Saints, so he is an immediate King unto them, Ephes.1.22...so as in this point of Headship, no Inferior power on Earth doth come between...he is an immediate Governor to them.²¹

SECTION B: LAITY AND THE MINISTRY

In modern times, the position of laymen in the Church is being discussed with renewed interest, but seventeenth century Puritans were as anxious to solve the question as any. One of John Owen's books was written "that the sacred calling may retaine its ancint dignity, though the people of God be not deprived of their Christian liberty."²² The difficulty of realizing his avowed purpose is apparent, but he was right in trying to hold a mediating position:

some would have all Christians to be almost Ministers, others

none but Ministers, to be Gods Clergie: Those would give the people the keys, these use them, to lock them out of the Church, the one ascribing to them primarily al Ecclesiasticall power for the ruling of the Congregation; the other abridging them of the performance of spirituall duties, for the building of their own soules: as though there were no habitable earth betweene the valley (I had almost said the pit) of Democraticall confusion and the precipitious rock of Hierarchicall tyranny: ²³

Theoretically, Presbyterians and Independents agreed that there is no distinction between laity and clergy. George Gillespie called such a division "Popish and Anti-Christian."²⁴ Some Independents were unfair to accuse their rivals of violating this tenet, but, there is no question that the Presbyterians tended to emphasize the importance of the ministry to the apparent disadvantage of the people. Many Congregationalists erred in the opposite direction by emphasizing the importance of the people to the apparent disadvantage of the ordained ministry. John Goodwin's definition of Presbyterianism is a little far-fetched, but illustrates the drift of an Independent's thought: Presbyterianism, he said, was

a way inslaving mens consciences; crushing the parts of these Saints which you call Lay-men, . . . a way to depresse truth to hinder the growth in grace and Spirituall communion with Christ. . . ²⁵

Already alluded to (supra) was the curious case of Thomas Goodwin's sermon before Parliament from Ps.105.15, on Feb. 25, 1645/6, when he defended the people's rights. Parliament could do no better service to the cause of Christ, said Goodwin, than to look after the interests of the Saints.

As the greatest interest of the devil's kingdom is to persecute those that keep the commandments of Jesus, so it is the greatest interest of the kingdom of Jesus Christ to preserve his saints, and to confound those that injure them, for he is the King of saints²⁶

But on May 12th, 1646, two and a half months later, the young Presbyterian named Simon Ford arrived in London from Puddle-Towne, Dorsetshire. He had read Thomas Goodwin's sermon and did not like its emphasis on the saints of God. It said nothing about the ordained ministry. Therefore he took the same text, adopted the same title, and proceeded to show how the great interest of states and kingdoms is the careful

treatment of its Christian ministers.

Whatever be the great and high Interests of Kings, States, and Kingdoms, on which their safety, or ruine most depends, there is none it concerns them more to look to, then the dealing well or ill with the Prophets of God.²⁷

From the same text of scripture, a Presbyterian saw a defence of the rights of the ministry, and a Congregationalist of the rights of the people. It illustrated the two points of view and the divergent emphases of both.

It must not be supposed, however, that because Thomas Goodwin had spoken so highly of "the people", that he meant to disparage the ministry. This is the error of the Brownists, because they downgrade the ministry: "the brownist Error at their first setting out" was in looking "on their Ministers but as Servants of the Church, and Instituted by the Church only, which is but of Human Institution."²⁸ There must be a medium where there is a mutual respect for the ministry and for the laymen. Nothing was more abhorrent to Thomas Goodwin than the possibility of a barrier between two classes of people in the Church:

Whatever other Relations binds us to, we are engaged to the same Duties by our Relation of Brethren in a Church... And the poorest, meanest Saint, is as worthy of it as any; for otherwise we should have the Faith of our Lord Jesus with respect of Persons, which the Apostle forbids, Jam. 2.1.²⁹

Nevertheless, the ordained ministry is set in the Church to execute some purpose of God.

As Great Men have Tutors for their Children in their Travel to perfect their understandings, and observe their Manners: So hath God betruusted his Church in their Pilgrimage with Ministers, whose work and calling it is to Read to you.³⁰

There is little difference between the high view of the ministry held by Thomas Goodwin and his Presbyterian counterparts, excepting that he would elevate the place of the people without lowering the ministry. Presbyterians tended to think that this was logically impossible.

SECTION C: THE CURE FOR HERESY

The point of bifurcation concerning the respective Presbyterian and Independent attitudes toward the ministry usually manifested itself in the search for an antidote for heresy. Presbyterians maintained that their discipline (exercised by the Presbytery) and backed up by ^{the} civil magistrate could eliminate heresy from the land; Independents held that the ministry was to stamp out heresy only through the positive preaching of the Word of God.

Ephraim Pagitt complained that

since the suspension of our Church government, every one that listeth turneth Preacher, as Shoo-makers, Coblers, Button-makers, Hostlers, and such like, take upon them to expound the holy Scriptures, intrude into our Pulpits, and vent strange doctrine, tending to faction, sedition, and blasphemy.³¹

Radical Presbyterians had such a high concept of the ministry, that they tended to recreate a clerical class as distinct from the people, which was exactly opposite from true Presbyterian principles.

Richard Vines taught that the way to cure heresy was to insist on a properly ordained ministry (i.e. by the Presbytery).³² This would eliminate unorthodox preaching, keep the ministry of the Word as the peculiar possession of a few, and insure against laymen intruding into Moses' chair. To keep unorthodox preachers from being ordained, Presbyterians relied on the magistrate, in addition to their discipline, to punish blasphemous heretics.³³ One way in which Parliament can help against heresy is

By encouraging and heartening the godly, orthodox painfull Ministry of the Gospell, in their assertings and vindicatings of the truths of Christ; and in their oppugnaing of wicked, dangerous and damnable opinions.³⁴

Marshall urged Parliament to search the scriptures and to see if they have the power to proceed against heresy...and then to use it if they are convinced.³⁵

Me thinks (most Noble Patriots) I see Religion like a forlorn Damosell in ragged attyre, with her disheveled haire, weeping eyes, and bleeding wounds lye prostrate at your feet; crying out like that woman of Tekoah, help O ye Nobles to rescue me from those Wolves and Foxes, Hereticks and Schismaticks that prey upon me; Oh be pleased to take her by the hand, rayse her up; Set her upon her legs: place a guard about her, and drive away her

enemies.³⁶

Independents expected Parliament to discourage heresy³⁷ but they had another more powerful cure for it.

Richard Baxter distrusted the panacea of the magistrate. The proper ministering of the Word "would have done more against errors and schism than all our chiding hath done, or than all the force can do which we desire from the magistrate."³⁸ He believed in the power of the Word to overcome all error.

As for all the sects and heresies that are creeping in daily and troubling us, I doubt not but the free gospel managed by able, self-denying ministry, will effectually disperse and shame them all.³⁹

Neither the power of the magistrate, nor any particular kind of church discipline was enough to secure against the rise of blasphemous teaching, said the Independents. The only way to attack heretics was by "sweating them with arguments."⁴⁰ In 1656, it was reported to Cromwell by a group of the London clergy that the Anglicans were taking their congregations away from them, and when Oliver asked how the "Cavaliers debauch your people?", an answer came back "By preaching". Whereupon, the Protector retorted "Then preach back again".⁴¹ The inherent power of truth to gain the field if given an opportunity was one of the strongest convictions of the Puritan mind.⁴²

Contrary to many Presbyterian writers, John Owen blamed the people for being confused in religion. Unordained laymen were diligently to search the Scriptures and examine and try the doctrine that ministers preached to them.⁴³

in these evill dayes wherein we live, I heare many daily complaining, that there is such difference, and contrariety among preachers, they know not what to doe, nor scarce what to believe; my answer is [to] Do but your own duty, and this trouble is at an end; is there any contrariety in the book of God? pin not your faith upon mens opinions, the Bible is the touchstone: that there is such diversity amongst teachers is their fault, who should thinke all the same thing; but that this is so troublesome to you, is your own fault, for neglecting your duty of trying all things by the word: Alas, you are in a miserable condition, if you have all this while, relied on the authority of men, in heavenly things; he that builds his faith upon preachers, though they preach nothing but truth, and he pretend to believe it, hath indeed no faith at all, but a wavering opinion, built upon a rotten foundation:⁴⁴

The trouble was not only the rottenness of the clergy, but the rottenness of the people who had negligently refused to try the "voice of the hireling" and to know the voice of the true shepherd.⁴⁵

SECTION D: THE USE OF LAY PREACHING

Ernst Troeltsch included the element of "prophesying" in his delineation of the characteristics of Puritanism.⁴⁶ It was right that he should put it at the top of the list in importance.

In spite of its affinity to Puritanism, the doctrine was not always a source of agreement amongst Presbyterians and Independents.⁴⁷ Part of the trouble in Holland between Thomas Hooker and John Paget centered on divergent viewpoints concerning lay prophesying.⁴⁸ In the sixteen forties, the Presbyterians set out to reform Oxford by preaching, but had their plans upset when some Independent soldiers (who were probably Seekers) tried to assist them in the work.⁴⁹ Arguments over this question permeated much of the thinking of the day, and the books written on the subject would fill a large library.

Presbyterian defenders were particularly anxious to protect the ministry against the intrusion of unordained, but gifted men. "There is a book printed, called, A Sermon preached at Plimmouth in N.E. which (as I am certified) was made there by a Comber of wooll,"⁵⁰ reported one Scottish minister. But John Cotton was vehemently opposed to such usurpation of ministerial prerogatives:

wee be far from allowing that sacralegious usurpation of the ministers office, which we heare of (to our grieve) to be practised in some places, that private Christians ordinarily take upon them to preach the Gospel publickly, and to minister Sacraments.⁵¹

No Presbyterian would have disagreed with Cotton's position, but Thomas Goodwin (in spite of his admiration for Cotton) could not go so far in despising the gifts of God.

wee humbly conceive Prophesying...or speaking to the edification

of the whole church, may (sometimes) be performed by Brethren gifted though not in Office as Elders of the Church.⁵²

Several rules governing the use of prophesy are given and it is evident that Goodwin wanted to keep it orderly and edifying.⁵³

Preaching was a charismatic undertaking to an Independent. He always championed an ex dono ministry rather than an ex officio one.⁵⁴ "To preach is an Act of gift...and he that hath gifts, may for the materiality of Preaching, perform all that a Minister doth out of gifts.⁵⁵

John Cook pointed out that Princes have preached in Geneva and Lairds in Scotland.⁵⁶ The inward call is more important than the outward call by men. An Independent

thinks him not zealous of mens salvation, that murmures at all mens preaching that are not fashioned in his shop, and wishes that Merchants would send men to preach Jesus Christ to the Indians, as well as Factors, for he thinks the true interest of England is the Protestant cause, to be as zealous to advance that, as the Spaniard is for popery.⁵⁷

Moderate Congregationalists believed in a specially trained, specially called ministry, but they did not believe that this should interfere with the prerogative of lay preaching. "A man may lawfully Preach the Word, who is not called to be a minister."⁵⁸ John Owen and Thomas Goodwin were certain that the first principle of evangelism must be the emancipation of the laity from clerical tyranny. Unordained, but gifted men were to preach the gospel.. This was their first proposal for the propagation of the good news.⁵⁹

Many middle of the road Presbyterian writers did not abrogate the use of lay preaching provided it was kept within the bounds of propriety and did not infringe on the rights of the ordained ministry. Richard Baxter warned ministers not to allow their people's gifts to sink into desuetude:

Make use of your people's parts to the uttermost, as your helpers, in an orderly way, under you guidance, or else they will make use of them in a disorderly and dividing way in opposition to you. It hath been a great cause of schism, when men would contemptuously cry down private men's preaching

and withal desire not to make any use of the gifts that God hath given them for their assistance; but thrust them too far from holy things, as if they were a profane generation. The work is like to go poorly on if there be no hands employed in it, but the ministers. God giveth not any of his gifts to be buried, but for common use. By prudent improvement of the gifts of the more able Christians, we may receive much help by them and prevent their abuse.⁶⁰

A more remarkable statement in Baxter would be difficult to find, because he had a very high concept of the Christian ministry and did not commend Independents who leveled it off. Evangelism dictated certain compromises which some Puritans would otherwise have found quite abhorrent. Even if order must be maintained in the Christian ministry, it must not be maintained at the cost of souls: "It's better that men should be disorderly saved than orderly damned; and that the Church be disorderly preserved than orderly destroyed."⁶¹ Order was a sacrosanct domain to Presbyterian writers:

The Presbyterians deny not but Private men may Preach in some cases. None that fear God do desire any to bury their Talent, nor would hinder men from doing the Work of God. But they would have bona bene, God's Work done in God's Order⁶²

Writing in defence of the Presbyterian cause, Apollonius of Middleburgh pointed to the use of lay prophesyings in the reformed churches:

private Christians from the common duty of Charity, making use of those spirituall gifts which they have received from God for mens edification, doe sometimes convert to the faith those souls which went astray; and bring those, who live in the world out of the Church of Christ. See John 4.29 etc. I Cor. 7.16.⁶³

Although this was an admission that laymen might do personal evangelism, it was not carte blanche. Public preaching must not be given into the hands of unauthorized persons.

Our Judgement is that none may publikely, in the Church Assembly of the faithfull, preach the Word of God, in the Name of Christ and of God, but he who is sent by a divine Calling for that work [i.e. ordained ministers only]⁶⁴

Private believers have a duty to speak to their neighbors or in extraordinary cases when there is no duly constituted church, but these privileges must not be construed to approach those of the regular ministry.

While John Owen was still a Presbyterian, he ridiculed those who criticized lay preaching:

we may observe, that those who are most offended, and afraid, lest others should encroach upon their callings, are for the most part such, as have almost deserted it themselves, neglecting their owne imployment, when they are the busiest of mortals, in things of this world.⁶⁵

It is interesting that Owen closes this tract by quoting from an Act of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1641, which authorized lay preaching under certain conditions.⁶⁶ The radical Presbyterian writers (with few exceptions) to whom we now turn, were not from North of the border.

"Let any man tell me in sober sadness," said the youthful Simon Ford, "whether by the Warrant, which they pretend from I Pet. 4.10. they may not as well make themselves Magistrates, as they conclude themselves Preachers."⁶⁷ One of the most questionable parts of Thomas Goodwin's sermon (The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms) had been its tacit acceptance of lay prophesyings. Ford strenuously objected.

One of the three things which Philip Henry had against the Independents was that "they throw the ministry in common and allow persons to preach who are unordained."⁶⁸

Robert Baillie's vindictive pen was not in keeping with many of his Scottish brethren. "...the permitting of private men out of office to preach, is a great meanes of confusion in the Church and breeding of errors and strife."⁶⁹ Only the Socinians and Arminians allow of such practice.⁷⁰

One of the radical defenders of ministerial rights was Matthew Poole:

There is hardly any one principle, which hath been more scandalous to thousands of the most judicious of Gods people, (both Ministers and others) and more unhappily instrumentall to the introduction, and propagation of all those loose, false, vain, frivolous and pernicious doctrines (which abound in the Nation) then the profession and practise of this specious opinion of liberty of prophesying.⁷¹

Evangelism meant very little to such extremists. Order and convention must govern the propagation of the Gospel. Not only Independents, but many moderate Presby-

terians would have joined in rejecting this view.

The subject of women preachers has had almost as much airing in recent times as it did in the seventeenth century.⁷² Although women were not usually officers in Congregational Churches,⁷³ some Presbyterian writers attempted to embarrass the Independents by asserting that they allowed women to preach.⁷⁴

When Women Preach, and Cobblers Pray,
The fiends in Hell make holiday.⁷⁵

The surprising thing is that the Independent moderates, who denied women the right to preach or speak or even sing, in some cases,⁷⁶ in the Church, never saw any inconsistency in their teaching of the priesthood of all believers.⁷⁷ Tension over the point has only arisen within Congregational circles in comparatively recent times.

SUMMARY

General agreement prevailed amongst Puritans concerning the need for a godly and qualified ministry to replace the corrupt Anglican clergy. Unfortunately, a definition of the terms "godly" and "qualified" proved difficult to achieve.

All concurred that Christ must be Lord of His people. But difficulties arose in transferring that power to the Church. A solution to this problem involved questions of democracy, the priesthood of all believers, and the creation of a "special ministry" upon which the first reformers had all insisted.

To have a group of officers set apart from the people and designated "ministers", immediately raised the problem of the laity and their function in the church. Presbyterians emphasized their ordained ministry; Congregationalists emphasized the prerogatives of the laypeople. In certain respects, the Presbyterian-Independent controversy was an attempt to define the duties of the laity in relation to an ecclesiastical order which aimed to guard the honor of the ministry without diminishing the liberty of the people. Both sides agreed that there must be no distinction between laity and clergy such as existed in Popish times, but to level off the saints with the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers only to build up a new kind of class system produced a marked dilemma.

The cure of heresy and the use of lay preaching presented two areas in which the Independent and Presbyterian ran full force into one another, because each approached the situation from a different standpoint of the functions and prerogatives of the Christian ministry.

perhaps significant that these seventeenth century problems have persisted into the twentieth and even now estrange the Congregationalist and the Presbyterians.

¹ John Lightfoot, The Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines: etc. (ed. by John Rogers pitman, vol. XIII, Works, London: 1824), p. 50, Nov. 13, 1643. Twenty-one requirements were prescribed for ordination including the one mentioned supra concerning the candidate's familiarity with "authors". Cf. James L. Ainslie, The Doctrines of Ministerial Order in the Reformed Churches of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1940), p. 139ff., Independents and Presbyterians alike had very high concepts of the Christian ministry. E.g. vide J. Max Patrick, Hugh Peters, A Study In Puritanism (The University of Buffalo Studies: vol. 17: no. 4, March 1946), p. 175 for Peter's exalted concept of the ministry; et Samuel Rutherford, Lex, Rex: The Law and the Prince. A Dispute for the just Prerogative of King and People. etc. (London: 1644), p. 422f., where the author insists that the ministry is higher even than the king, because the latter is responsible to the people (as well as to God) through a covenant relationship, whereas the ministry is dependent only on Christ.

² George Gillespie, in his Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster. etc. (ed. by David Meek, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846), p. 53, April 18, 1644, tells us that Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye argued against a Presbyterian motion to impose an age limit for the ministry. The former sarcastically snapped that they might as well set a date for confirmation and be wholly like the papists, if they imposed so many extra-biblical ministerial qualifications.

³ One Blow More at Babylon: or a Discourse (Dialogue-wise between two Travellers out of the West,) Opening and Answering the Grounds of the Presbyterians opposing the Parliaments and Independents present Proceedings in Reforming things Sacred and Civil in the Commonwealth of England, as it is now established. etc. (London: 1650), Introduction or Epistle Dedicatory, unpagged.

⁴ The situation was not caused by lack of information on the subject. Writers were legion. Vide Samuel Rutherford, A Peaceable and Temperate Plea Paul's Presbyterie In Scotland, etc. (London: 1642). This book is a series of twenty propositions debated by the author, who vindicates the Church of Scotland in all particulars; number seventeen deals with the ministry. Most of the propositions of Richard Baxter's Worcestershire Association concerned the work and duty of ministers to their flocks; vide Christian Concord: or the Agreement of the Associated Pastors and Churches of Worcestershire etc. (London: 1653). Chapter V of Apollonius's book called A Consideration of Certain Controversies at this time agitated in the Kingdome of England, Concerning the Government of the Church of God. etc. (London, 1645), was entitled, "Of the Ecclesiasticall Ministry and the Exercize thereof". This was answered by John Norton, in his Responsio ad Totam Quaestionum Syllogen a clarissimo Viro Domino Guiljelmo Appollonio Ecclesiae Middleburgensis Pastore, propositam Ad componendas Controversias quaedam circa Politiam Ecclesiasticam in Agalia nunc temporis agitatae spectantem (Londini: 1648), Chaps. IV (p. 56ff), V, VI, VII, "De Ministerio & Potestate Ecclesiastica" et Chap. VIII, "De Vocatione Ministrorum" (p. 96ff). B. Hanbury, Historical Memorials Relating to the Independents etc. (Londo: printed for the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1839-1844), p. 427, II, remarks that Norton's book was the first book published in Latin in America. William Ames wrote in his Conscience with the Power and Casses Thereof (I have used the English edition of 1639 which was a translation of the Latin edition of 1632), Chap. XXIV (pp. 162ff.), Bk. V, "Of the Mutuall Obligation betweene Ministers and their Flock." Vide also, Richard Mather, Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed, In an Answer of the Elders of the severall Churches in New England To two and thirty Questions sent over to them by divers Ministers in England

to declare their judgments therein. etc. (London: 1643), pp. 5, 6, questions 20-25 deal with officers, their calling, election, and duties, etc. Cf. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Visible Saints (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 86, for a list of several other authors who wrote on the subject.

⁵ Chap. VIII: Sect. I., "Of Christ the Mediator", in S.W. Carruthers, The Westminster Confession of Faith (Manchester: R. Aikman and Son, 1937), p. 105, "Christ is both 'Head and Saviour of His Church'".

⁶ Vide also Sect. I., "Of the Institution of Churches and the Order Appointed in them by Jesus Christ". This was appended to the Confession of Faith by the Independents who did not want matters of polity to be imposed as articles of faith. Albert Peel, The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, 1658 (London: Independent Press, 1939), p. 70.

⁷ W.M. Hetherington, History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (fourth edition ed. by Robert Williamson, Edinburgh: James Gemmell, 1878), p. 234. Cf. Ainslie, op. cit., p. 28ff., Christ as head of the Church may be "looked upon as creating a historic ruling principle in the Reformed Churches" (p. 32).

⁸ The Divine Right of Church Government by Sundry Ministers of Christ within the City of London. Originally published in 1646, I have used the Paisley edition printed by Neilson and Weir (1799), p. 47.

⁹ Vide Alexander F. Mitchell, The Westminster Assembly (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1883), p. 1.

¹⁰ Henry Burton, A Vindication of Churches, commonly called Independent: etc. (London: 1644), p. 1.

¹¹ On May 12th, 1647, in the Assembly, Philip Nye and Sidrach Simpson dissented from a part of the catechism, which read, "Q. How doth Christ execute the office of a king? A. Christ executes the office of a king, in calling out of the world a people for his name, and giving them officers, laws, and censures, by which he visibly governs them." They disliked the phrase, "by which he visibly governs them", wishing to have an internal rule through the Holy Spirit rather than an external rule through an ecclesiastical system. Vide. A.F. Mitchell et John Struthers (eds.), Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines etc. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), p. 365, Sess. 841.

¹² Burton, op. cit., p. 42.

¹³ J.M. Phillips, "Can We Justify Independency To-Day?", The Congregational Quarterly, vol. XVI:2 (April, 1938), p. 178, citing Fairbairn's Studies in Religion and Theology. This is a very pertinent article on the subject.

¹⁴ This quotation from Henry Jacob (1612) is found on the title page of Benjamin Hanbury's Historical Memorials Relating to the Independents, etc. (London: printed for the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1839), vol. 1.

¹⁵ John Cotton, The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England. etc. (London: 1645), p. 43. Cf. R.W. Dale, History of English Congregationalism (London: Hodder

and Stoughton, 1907), p.207, "All the principal leaders of Independency had very high views of the place and power of pastors and elders. It was not their theory that the authority of church officers is derived from the people who elect them. They believed that the Church merely determines what persons rule: the power is derived from God."

16

Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries etc. (London: 1644), p.7. Cf. Ainslie, op. cit., p.49, who cites the London ministers in 1654 preaching to the people "in the stead of Christ". Any office or doctrine which separated the people from their Lord was repugnant to an Independent.

17

Guilielmus Apollonii, A Consideration of Certain Controversies at this time agitated in the Kingdome of England, Concerning the Government of the Church of God. etc. (London: 1645), p.37.

18

John Cotton, The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven and Power thereof according to the Word of God. etc. (London: 1644), p.4, "Epistle to the Reader" written by Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye. I have used a reprint edition from Boston by Tappan and Dennet, 1843. William Ames, too, taught that Christian ministers depended directly on Christ for authority and power; vide The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the holy Scriptures, and the Interpreters thereof, and brought into Method (London: n.d.), p.145. This was in line with R.W. Dale, who wrote that the ultimate Protestant principle is the direct access of the soul to God; vide Protestantism: Its Ultimate Principle (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1874), p.77.

19

George Gillespie, An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland, etc. (Edinburgh: 1641), p.202.

20

Robert Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London: 1646), p.223.

21

Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), p.258, IV. Although this quotation was primarily about Erastianism, it also applied to Presbyterianism which shut out the people from the direct reign of Christ through the creation of a special ministerial order which too often took the place of a clerical class not unlike the papists. Vide also p.295 for Goodwin's emphasis on the Lordship of Christ; et p.5, of the Government and Discipline of the Churches of Christ, propos'd familiarly by way of Question and Answer (bound in vol. IV. of Works, 1696 ed.), where the author gives several uses of the doctrine of the Lordship of Christ over the Church.

22

John Owen, The Duty of Pastors and People Distinguished. etc. (London: 1644), p.10 (mispagd, it should be p.2).

23

Loc. cit.

24

George Gillespie, An Assertion, etc. (Edinburgh: 1641), p.3.

25

[John Goodwin], Certain brief Observations and Antiquaeries, etc. (1644), p.12. Cf. A.J. Crieve, "Presbyterian-Congregational Union? Some Points of View", The Congregational Quarterly, XXV:4 (Oct., 1947), p.302, who opposes the merger

because of so-called Presbyterian "depreciation of the layman". Dr. Geoffrey Nuttall also questions such merger in its relationship to certain ministerial questions. Ibid., p.303.

²⁶ Thomas Goodwin, The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms, A sermon preached at the late fast before the Commons House of Parliament, Feb. 25, 1645, (Works, 1861 ed. vol. XII), p.54. It is in the true Goodwin tradition that Douglas Horton speaks of the unique feature of Congregationalism being its "congregation". Vide his Congregationalism: A Study in Church Polity (London: 1952), p.88.

²⁷ Simon Ford, The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms. The Second Part. A Sermon Preached on a Publike Thanksgiving on the 12th of May, 1646. at Botolphs Alders-gate: And after (upon the desire of some friends) enlarged at Pauls Church in Covent-garden, on the Lords Day, May 17th. 1646 (London: 1646), p.4.

²⁸ Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), p.287, IV (mispaged, it should be p.297). Cf. William Rathband, A Most Grave, and Modest Confutation of the Errors of the Sect, commonly called Brownists, or Separatists, etc. (London: 1644), which attempts to defend the ministry as well as the members against the encroachments of the Brownists on both.

²⁹ Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), op. cit., p.302.

³⁰ Ibid., p.315. He used the analogy on p.265 and adds that although God "set" them over the children, yet they were still "their" servants, meaning the servants of the people. The ministry is both from God and for man, without the dilemma of origins from God and / or man being broached.

³¹ Ephraim Pagitt, Heresiography, Or a Discription of the Heretickes and Sectaries Sprang up in these latter times. etc. (London: 1647), "Epistle Dedicatory", unpagged.

³² Richard Vines, The Authours, Nature, and Danger of Haeresie. Laid open in a Sermon Preached before the Honorable House of Commons at Margarets Westminster, upon Wednesday the Tenth of March 1646. being set apart as a Solemne day of Publike Humiliation to seeke Gods assistance for the suppressing and preventing of the growth and spreading of Errours, Heresies, and Blasphemies. (London: 1647), p.10f.

³³ Dr. Ainslie denies that Presbyterians ever appealed to Parliament, because of their doctrine of the Lordship of Christ and because they were opposed to Erastianism; vide op. cit., p.29. But the facts of the case seem to discredit his view, because almost every Presbyterian preacher of the times who had the opportunity to preach before Parliament used his privilege tendentiously. E.g. Richard Vines, The Authours, Nature, and Danger of Haeresie. etc., op. cit., p.65, urges the Parliament to proceed against heretics. Examples of Presbyterians who sought the Magistrate's aid against heretics are the following: The London Ministers, The Divine Right of Church Government (Paisley edition: 1799), p.65; Simon Ford, The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms. etc. (London: 1646), p.36; Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries etc. (London: 1644) p.352; George Gillespie, An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland, etc. (Edinburgh: 1641), p.90; Thomas Hodges, The Growth and Spreading of Haeresie etc. (London: 1647), p.53; Ephraim

Pagitt, Heresiography: etc. (London: 1647), "The Epistle Dedicatory", unpagged.

³⁴Obadiah Sedgwick, The Nature and Danger of Heresies, Opened in a Sermon Before The Honourable House of Commons, January 27. 1646. at Margarets Westminster, being the day of their solemne Monthly Fast. (London: 1647), p. 38.

³⁵Stephen Marshall, The Right Understanding of the times: Opened in a Sermon preached to the Honorable House of Commons, December 30, 1646. At Margaret Westminster, Being the day of their solemne Monthly Fast. (London: 1647), p. 33.

³⁶Nathaniel Hardy, The Arraignment of Licentious Liberty, and Oppressing Tyranny. In a Sermon Preached before the Right Honourable House of Peers, in the Abbey-Church at Westminster, on the day of their solemne Monethly Fast, Febr. 24, 1646 (London: 1647), p. 16.

³⁷The Savoy Declaration provided for the encouragement of the true religion by the magistrate; vide op. cit., p. 59, Chap. XXIV; Sect. III. Once, the Independents even petitioned Parliament for the suppression of "judiciall astrology". Vide F. J. Powicke, "The Independents of 1652", Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society, IX (1924-1926), prop. #15, p. 23ff. No Independent was more Presbyterian than William Ames in his Conscience with the Power and Cases Thereof (n.p.: 1639), p. 12, Bk. IV, chap. IV, "Of Heresies. Question 6. Whether are Heretickes to be punished by the Magistrate? A. I. Heretickes are to be resisted by every one that is godly according to the calling and power which he hath received from God... A. 2. The place and office of a Magistrate requires, that he repress wicked men that trouble the Church, even with the sword..." Cf. Christ on His Throne etc. (n.p.: 1640), p. 60. Both Presbyterians and Independents in the Westminster Assembly agreed to Certain Considerations to Dis-swade Men from Further Gathering of Churches etc. (London: n.d.), p. 2, consideration no. 1: "That although it be the duty of all the servants of Christ, to keepe themselves alwayes pure from corruption in Religion, and to indeavour in an orderly way, the Reformation of it; Yet is it an undoubted Maxime, that it belongs to Christian Magistrates in an especiall manner to be authorizers of, and Ministers of the Gospel to be Leaders in, such Reformation." The full Independent position is found in John Norton's Responsio ad Totam Quaestionum etc. (Londini: 1648), chap. XV, pp. 147ff., entitled, "De Magistratii Politico." Thomas Goodwin, himself, in the debates at Westminster, expected the magistrate to assist the particular churches in his dominion. Vide George Gillespie, Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of divines etc. (ed. by David Meek, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846), p. 83, Oct. 1, 1644. At the same time, however, Goodwin maintained that the power of the magistrate was not indispensable for defending the honor of Christ. Vide his Of the Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the Churches Churches of Christ, vol. IV, Works (1696 ed.), p. 23 And although the magistrate has civil power over the churches (ibid., p. 221, mispagged, and should be pp. 201-202), yet Goodwin warned that this power is limited: "tho you read Matth. 22. 9. that Christ said, Compel them to come in, that my House may be full, Luke 14. 23. Tho there be a Compulsion to be used for lthe filling of Christ's Church, yet this is not the Compulsion of the Civil Sword, for it is the Compulsion of the Servants that are sent to call, and they are the Ministers of Christ." That many Independents were very close to the Presbyterian concept of the magistrates is evident when Stephen Marshall cited Cotton's Answer to the Bloody Tenet in the former's The Power of the Civil Magistrate (London: 1657), "Epistle Dedicatory", unpagged, in order to justify the magistrate's roll in punishing heretics. Thomas Edwards in a similar connection quoted Jeremiah Burrough's, Irenicum in the former's The Casting downe of the Last stronghold of Satan. etc. (London: 1647), p. 53.

³⁸ Richard Baxter, Gildas Salvianus: The Reformed Pastor (ed. by John Wilkinson, London: The Epworth Press, 1955), p.155. Baxter was bemoaning one of the curious features of the Presbyterian-Independent controversy, which concerned the roll of the magistrate in religious affairs. Both sides accused the other of infringing on the rights of the State. For the Presbyterians, vide William Prynne, Twelve Considerable Serious Questions touching Church Government, etc. (London: 1644), p.3, proposition "5"; Adam Stewart, Some Observations and annotations Upon the Apologeticall Narration, etc. (London: 1643), p.52; Thomas Edwards, Reasons against the Independant Government of Particular Congregations: etc. (London: 1644), p.29 reason VII, (mislabeled VI); Robert Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London: 1646), p.31; Pagitt's Heresiography, op. cit., p.90, cites an extract from an Act of the National Synod of the Reformed Church of France at Charantown, Dec. 26, 1644, that independency is "most dangerous to the State". Bulstrode Whitelock's Erastian view was really a Presbyterian one. Vide Gillespie, Notes op. cit., p.27, Feb. 16, 1644. Independents, likewise accused the Presbyterians of being dangerous to the State. Vide e.g. Henry Burton's Conformitie's Deformity etc. (London: 1646), p.20; An Apologeticall Narration etc. (London: 1643), p.19; Lewis Du Moulin, The Conformity of the Discipline and Government of those who are commonly called Independents to that of the Ancient Primitive Christians (London: 1680), p.16. One of the leading spirits in the Assembly regarding the Presbyterian danger to the state was Philip Nye. Vide Gillespie, Notes, op. cit., p.70, Sept. 10, 1644 et Gustafsson, op. cit., p.15. One Presbyterian who defended the Independents against charges of being dangerous to the State was Cheynell. Vide His Rise of Socinianism, as cited in G. P. Gooch, English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge: University Press, second edition, 1927), p.69. Actually, these charges and counter-charges had been a bone of contention since the days of Hooker and Paget's quarrel of the 1630's. Vide Raymond Stearns, Congregationalism in the Dutch Netherlands (Chicago: The American Society of Church History, 1940), p.106, proposition number fifteen.

³⁹ Baxter, Gildas, op. cit., p.94 (footnote number one). Cf. S.W. Carruthers, The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly (Philadelphia: published by the Presbyterian Societies of America and England, 1943), p.91, for the effect of the shortage of godly ministers in the 1640's.

⁴⁰ John Eastwick considered this method quite insufficient; vide Independency Examined, Unmasked, and Refuted (London: 1656), "Epistle to the homothumadon brethren" [i.e. the Independents], unpagued.

⁴¹ Cited in Jordan, op. cit., p.100, III.

⁴² James Cranford, writing in an unpagued epistle to John Brinsley's The Araignment of the Present Schism of New Separation in Old England, etc. (London: 1646), remarked that "Truth is strong, and will prevail against Heresies." Lazarus Seaman, The ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗ Proved to be ΤΑΡΑ ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗ etc. (London: 1647), "The Epistle Dedicatory", unpagued, concurred: "These are times, wherein Truth must learn to go alone and to stand by her own strength." And the matured Richard Baxter admitted in his Autobiography: "I shall not hereafter much fear such toleration, nor despair that truth will bear down adversaries," as cited in Wilbur K. Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England 1640-1660 (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1938), p.173. Besides these Presbyterians, there were many Independents who also believed in the inherent power of truth. William Dell (a Baptist), in his The Way of true peace and unity, p.115, as cited in Jordan, op. cit., p.514, is typical:

"And let it not be doubted, but if the truth of God doe enter the lists against error, it will be infinitely able to prevaile of itself alone, without calling in any power, or borrowing any weapons from the world." Likewise, Henry Burton's A Vindication, 1644), p. 71: "Magna est veritas, et praevallet," was eminently Puritan. The motto of Cheam, the school where the present Prince Philip attended in 1930-33 and where Prince Charles is currently enrolled has this motto: "magma vis veritatis." The school dates back to 1646...the heart of the Puritan Revolution!

⁴³ John Owen, The duty of Pastors and People distinguished. etc. (London: 1644) p. 42.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 43. Cf. John Milton's Areopagitica, etc, vol. I., A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works etc. (Amsterdam: 1698), p. 436.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 45. Matthew Poole disagreed radically with Owen in his A Moderate Enquiry into the Warrantableness of the Preaching of Gifted and Unordained Persons (London: date cut off in binding process of copy in New College Library, University of Edinburgh), p. 129, who believed that the people are too ignorant to spot error.

⁴⁶ Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches (tr. by Olive Wyon, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1931), p. 679.

⁴⁷ Several indicative titles are given in the Catalogue of the Pamphlets, Books, Newspapers, and Manuscripts Relating to the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and Restoration, Collected by George Thomason, 1640-1661 (London: British Museum, 1908), Index, p. 620: "Antidote against Lay Preaching", "Lay-Preaching unmasked", "Caveats to Tradesmen-Preachers", "Mercurius Anti-mechanicus", "Cloudie Clergie", "Pulpit guarded", "Gagge for Lay Preachers", etc. Several controversies centered on this issue. E.g. William Sheppard's People's Privilege guarded against the Pulpit and Preachers Incroachment (1652) was soon answered by John Collins's Responsoria ad erratica pastoris, sive, Vindiciae vindiciarum. Id est, The Shepherd's wanderings discovered in a revindication of the great ordinances of God, Gospel-preachers and preaching. By way of answer to a late booke called The Peoples privileges and duty guarded against the pulpit and preacher's encroachment, by William Sheppard. (1652) Another book, by John Collins had been the catalytic agent for much literary activity, also. It was his Vindiciae Ministerii Evangelici: a vindication of a Gospel Ministry (1651), which soon drew forth many answers (vide Catalogue supra, p. 620, index).

⁴⁸ John Paget, the Presbyterian, denied the use of it and Thomas Hooker, the Independent, affirmed it. Vide R. Phineas Stearns, Congregationalism in the Dutch Netherlands (Chicago: The American Society of Church History, 1940), p. III.

⁴⁹ Vide "The Register of the Vistors of the University of Oxford, from A.D. 1647 to A.D. 1658", (ed. by Montagu Burrows for the Camden Society, 1881), p. lx.

⁵⁰ Samuel Rutherford, Lex, Rex; etc., op. cit., p. 46. Cf. Ephraim Pagitt, Heresiography, Or a Discription of the Heretickes and Sectaries Sprang up in these latter times. etc. (London: 1647), "To the Reader", unpagged, "But whence came they now? [i.e. minsters and preachers] from the Schooles of the Prophets? no, many of them from mechanick Trades: as one from a stable, from currying his horses: another from his stall, from cobbling his shooes, and these sit down in Moses chair to mend all, as Embassadors of Jesus Christ, as Heralds of the most high God." William Haller (ed.), in his Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution 1638-1647 (New York:

Columbia University Press, 1934), p. 56, I, has reprinted one of the broadslides from the Thomason Collection in which a list of 49 current "damnable tenets" is given. Added to the list is a drawing (opposite p. 56) showing nine types of tradesmen who were preachers: "a confectioner, a smith, a sho-maker, a taylor, a sadler, a porter, a boxmaker, a sope-boiler, a glover, a meal-man, a chicken-man, and a Buttonmaker". Nothing was more repulsive to the Presbyterian concept of the ministry than for such men to preach. In the Assembly, it is recorded that a certain ministerial candidate was refused approbation by the Westminster divines on Dec. 13, 1643, because he had the nerve to choose as his text, Philippians 1:18 which reads "What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice." Vide Carruthers, Everyday, op. cit., p. 170. A more opprobrious text to the Presbyterians in the Assembly could hardly have been found.

⁵¹ John Cotton, The Keyes Of the Kingdom of Heaven, And the Power thereof, according to the Word of God. etc. (published by Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye, London: 1644), p. 27. I have used an edition published in Boston, by Tappan and Dennet, 1853. John Cotton's opposition to lay preaching embarrassed the Independents. Richard Baxter, in his Church Concord: etc. (London: 1691), p. 39, quoted Cotton's Keyes in opposition to the practice, noting that Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye had dissented from Cotton (p. 6 of the Preface to the Keys) in the use of lay prophesying. Cf. the anonymous Vindiciae Clavium: or a Vindication of the Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven, into the hands of the right Owners. etc. (London: 1645), epistle "To the Reader", unpaged, whose author ridicules Goodwin and Cotton for disagreeing over ten particulars in the Keys. William Nicholson, in his An Apology For the Discipline of the Ancient Church: Intended especially for that of our Mother The Church of England: etc. (London: 1659), p. 1, also cites Thomas Goodwin and John Cotton's different views of the Keys.

⁵² Ibid., p. 9f., Thomas Goodwin gives several points of disagreement between himself and John Cotton. There has been some discussion as to the origin of Thomas Goodwin's doctrine of lay prophesying. Berndt Gustafsson, in his The Five Dissenting Brethren: A Study on the Dutch Background of their Independentism (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1955), p. 99, points to the fact that Acontius espoused the doctrine, then the Remonstrants of Holland got it from him, and finally the Independents imbibed it from the Remonstrants. But this post hoc ergo propter hoc argument will not stand, because John Goodwin implied in a letter to Thomas Goodwin (around 1640), while the latter was still in Holland, that the reason he had fled England in the first place was that he wanted liberty for laymen to prophesy. (vide Thomas Goodwin's Works, 1696 ed., p. 40, correspondence appended to volume IV). If this is true, then Thomas believed in lay prophesying before he ever went to Holland and subsequent environmental pressures only confirmed a previous notion.

⁵³ Cf. Richard Mather, Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed, In an Answer of the Elders of the severall Churches in New-England To two and thirty Questions, sent over to them by divers Ministers in England to declare their judgments therein. etc. (London: 1643), p. 6, (Propositions 27, 28, 29, deal with lay prophesying). The elders of New England were willing to allow some use of lay prophesying provided it had certain safeguards, but they did not allow any question time after the Sunday sermon as was done in some Independent churches (vide pp. 77, 78). In this, and many other respects, the New England churches were further right than Thomas Goodwin. Actually, they more nearly approximated the Scottish Presbyterians by insisting on order, than the English Independents. John Robinson claimed in 1618, that the practice of lay prophesying was in all the reformed churches; vide Geoffrey F. Nuttall, The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (Oxford: Basil

Blackwell, 1946), p.77. Robinson's "The People's Plea for the Exercise of Prophecy" (1618) is bound in Vol. 3, Works (London: John Snow, 1851).

⁵⁴Vide Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "The Early Congregational Conception of the Church", Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society XIV (1940-1944), p.201; et Nuttall, "The Early Congregational Conception of the Ministry and the Place of Women Within It", Congregational Quarterly, XXVI:2 (April, 1948), p.156, "For Congregationalism...the essential thing about the ministry is its charismatic nature."

⁵⁵Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), p.10, IV, "Of the Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ".

⁵⁶John Cook, What The Independents Would Have, or, A Character, Declaring some of their Tenets, and their desires to disabuse those who speak ill of that they know not. (London: 1647), p.15.

⁵⁷Loc. cit.

⁵⁸Sidrach Simpson, ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗ Wherein the Judgement of the Reformed Churches and Protestant Divines, is shewed, Concerning Ordination. Laying on of Hands in Ordination of Ministers: And, Preaching by those who are not Ordained Ministers. (London: 1647), p.3, Part III. This tract was published anonymously; the Dictionary of National Biography attributes it to Simpson, however. If indeed, he did write it, our contention made earlier concerning the moderate Independent desires to gain the support of the Reformed churches is further justified. Presbyterians were usually too peremptory in assuming that the Reformed Churches abroad exclusively supported their polity.

⁵⁹Vide F.J. Powicke, "The Independents of 1652", Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society, IX (1924-1926), p.23f.

⁶⁰Baxter, Reformed Pastor, op. cit., p.153, italics mine.

⁶¹J.M. Lloyd Thomas (ed.), The Autobiography of Richard Baxter (London: Everyman's Library, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1931), p. xxvi, xxvii, footnote no.1 quoting Five Disputations, p.165.

⁶²Richard Baxter, Church Concord; etc. (London: 1691, although the original edition appeared in 1655 according to the title page), p.38f. Baxter quotes several examples from Early Fathers who approved of lay preaching (e.g. Origen, who preached without being ordained); vide chap. X. "Private mens Preaching". Ignatius Jones, Lay Preaching-Yesterday and Today, "Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society XIV (1940-1944), p.51, incorrectly stated that Baxter repudiated lay preaching. But it is true to say that Baxter emphasized order more than evangelism on some occasions. Vide e.g. Philolaoclerus, The Private Christians Non-Ultra or, A Plea for the Lay-Man's Interpreting the Scriptures (n.p., n.d.), p.18, who quotes Baxter's views on the larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly with emphasis on order.

⁶³Guilielmus Apollonii, A Consideration of Certain Controversies at this time agitated in the Kingdome of England, Concerning the Government of the Church of God. etc. (London: 1645), p.67. Vide p.66ff., Chap. V, "Of the Ecclesiastical Ministry, and the Exercise thereof."

⁶⁴Ibid., p.75. Cf. John Norton, Responsio ad Totam Quaestionum Syllogen a

clarissimo Viro Domino Guilielmo Apollonio Ecclesiae Middleburgensis Pastore, propositam. Ad componendas Controversias quasdam circa Politiam Ecclesiasticam in Anglia nunc temporis agitatae spectantem. (Londini: 1648), p.120ff., "De Exercitio Prophetico".

⁶⁵ Owen, Duty of People and Pastors, op. cit., p.54.

⁶⁶ Loc. cit. The first Scottish Book of Discipline had provided for the practice of lay prophesying as early as 1560.

⁶⁷ Simon Ford, The Great Interest of States and Kingdomes, op. cit., p.27.

⁶⁸ Diary of Philip Henry, p.277 cited by C.E. Whiting, op. cit., p.46.

⁶⁹ Robert Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London: 1646) p.177.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.174. Baillie tried to make out that the Independents were hopelessly divided on the issue (vide pp.77,174). He refers to the rift in the Independent Church at Rotterdam over the use of lay prophesyings. Thomas Edwards even claimed to have a letter from Holland concerning the controversy in this Independent Church; vide Antapologia: Or A Full Answer to the Apologeticall Narration etc. (London: 1646), p.118, and made much of the so-called division among the Independent leaders over the problem. The truth is that there was as much variation among Presbyterian writers on the use of lay prophesying as supposedly existed between William Bridge and Sidrach Simpson in the Church at Rotterdam.

⁷¹ Matthew Poole, A Moderate Enquiry into the Warrantableness of the Preaching of Gifted and unordained Persons. (London: date cut off in binding process of the copy in the New College Library, University of Edinburgh), "Epistle to the Reader", unpagged.

⁷² Vide F.W., "A Plea for Female Deacons," The Congregationalist, VI (1877), p.482., which shows an early tendency to admit women into church offices in Congregational churches; "By a Bachelor" (so the author styles himself), "Women-Preachers", The Congregational Monthly, V (1892), p.311ff., who quotes Dr. Johnson's comment about a woman speaking at a Quaker meeting to the effect that a woman preaching was like a dog standing on its hind legs (p.312); J. Hiles Hitchens "Preaching Women", The Congregationalist, XV (1886), p.719-726, "We contend that public addresses by women to promiscuous gatherings are offenses to good taste, opposed to feminine characteristics, and antagonistic to Scriptural directions"(p.726); et Geo. Sale Reaney, "Preaching Women", The Congregationalist, XV (1886),p.844-849, which is a violent defense against Hitchens's article (supra). In spite of these nineteenth century notions, modern Congregationalists admit women into the ministry. Vide Norman Goodall, Congregationalism Plus (London: 1953), p.41, who quotes from the "Wellesley Statement" admitting women ministers. An indication of the furore raised by women preachers in the seventeenth century are the tracts on the subject listed in the Thomason Collection. Vide Catalogue of the Pamphlets, Books, Newspapers, and Manuscripts Relating to the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and Restoration, Collected by George Thomason, 1640-1661 (London: British Museum, 1908), p.620, II (Index). Such titles as "Discovery of Six Women Preachers" and "Spirit Moving in the Women Preachers" appear.

⁷³Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, in his "The Early Congregational Conception of the Ministry and the Place of Women Within It," Congregational Quarterly, XXVI:2 (April, 1948), p.157, says, "I know of no case where such a thing is even mooted as a possibility." William Perkins, [said] "public teaching is flatly forbidden to a woman."

⁷⁴Robert Baillie, in his Dissuasive, op. cit., p.140, quotes W. Prynn et John Bastwick: "to interest the Female Sex and draw them to their party, they allow them not only decisive votes but liberty of preaching, prophesying speaking in their Congregations." (quoted from Prinne's Fresh Discovery, p.5.). But this is scarcely a true statement. John Cotton would not even allow women to ask questions in Church; Vide Dissuasive, op. cit., p.147 et cf. p.148. Cf. John Robinson, Works London: John Snow, 1851), p.326, III, who denies women the right to prophesy in his people's plea for the exercise of prophecy". One of the most embarrassing moments in the Westminster Assembly for the Presbyterian assailers of women preachers occurred on Nov. 30, 1643, when Mr. Bayly (the Englishman, not the Scot) confessed that a woman had converted him to Presbyterianism from Episcopalianism! Vide John Lightfoot, Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines: etc. (vol. XIII of Works, ed. by John Rogers Pitman, London: 1824), p. 67.

⁷⁵T. C. Crippen cites this in his "Anti-Brownist Pamphlets, 1641-42", Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society, V (1911-1912), p.84, from Lucifer's Lackey, or the Devil's New Creation (London: 1641). Because of the appearance of this tract, Robert Barclay, op. cit., p.155. says that women preachers must have been active in some Independent Churches as early as 1641. Cf. Nuttall, Holy Spirit, op. cit., p.87, on Quaker women preachers; et Harold Earle Walker, "The Conception of a ministry in the Quaker Movement And A Survey of its Development", (unpublished thesis in New College, University of Edinburgh, 1952), p.66, who says that preaching by women was not always acceptable to early Quakers. One contemporary writer asserted that it was the "Trent Conspiracy" which said a "distaffe was fitter for women than a Bible"; vide Philolaoclerus, The Private Christians Non Ultra or, A Plea for the Lay-Man's Interpreting the Scriptures (n.p. and n.d.), p.19. Only people such as Julian, the Apostate, Charge "The Christians, that their women were medlers with the Scriptures." (Ibid., p.20). Perhaps the best summary of the situation has been given by Dr. Geoffrey Nuttall: "Throughout the seventeenth century it seems clear that women's 'prophesyings' was a feature and recognized part of the full diet of worship in many churches if still always outside the framework of the regular ministry;" vide "The Early Congregational Conception of the Ministry and the Place of Women Within it, (April, 1948), p.159. Cf. George Gillespie, An Assertion of the Governmant of the Church of Scotland, etc. (Edinburgh: 1641), p.37, who denies that Romans 12 speaks of "gifts", because this would open the door to women using the gift of prophecy. Instead, Gillespie asserts that the passage speaks of offices. We do not argue over which view is correct, but only point out how far the bias against women preachers influenced Presbyterian exegesis. The spirit of John Knox's, "The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women" permeated the 1640's, as much as it had the year 1558.

⁷⁶Vide Baillie's Dissuasive, op. cit., p.147, on John Cotton's refusing to allow women to ask questions of the preacher, Cf. p.148 on Independents' denying women the right to sing Psalms in Church.

⁷⁷Thomas Goodwin, for instance, speaks of Aquilla and Apollos in Acts. 18. The one was willing to learn and the other willing to teach. "Both minded Christ". But it is significant that he, being deathly afraid of women preachers, does not mention

any part which Priscilla had in the transaction. Vide Works, p. 34, Catechism appended to end of vol. IV, 1696 ed.). Gillespie records in his Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and Other Commissioners at Westminster, etc. (ed., by David Meek, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846), p. 32, March 1, 1644, that Thomas Goodwin even said that there must not have been any women amongst those scattered after the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts 8, because they went preaching (verse 4). This kind of extreme exegesis resulted from faulty presuppositions.

CHAPTER X

THE MINISTRY AND DEMOCRACY

SECTION A: THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH, ARISTOCRATIC OR DEMOCRATIC ?

Contrary to the historians who have traced modern democracy back to seventeenth century Congregationalism, most of the leaders of Independency repudiated purely democratic practices in favor of a mixed polity. John Robinson's position is typical:

We believe that the external church government under Christ, the only Mediator and Monarch thereof, is plainly aristocratical, and to be administered by some certain choice men, although the State, which many unskilfully confound with the government, be after a sort popular and democratical. By this it appertains to the people freely to vote in elections and judgments of the Church. In respect of the other, we make account it behoves the elders to govern the people even in their voting, in just liberty, given by Christ whatsoever (I Cor. xii. 28; I Tim. v. 17; Heb. xiii. 17)¹

The government of the Church was to be partly aristocratical and partly democratical.

None of the great leaders of Independency sponsored a democratical church polity:

The forme of this polity is altogether monarchicall in respect of Christ, the head and King; but as touching the visible and vicarious administration, [i. e. through government] it is of a mixt nature, partly as it were aristocraticall and partly as it were democraticall²

The moderate position of William Ames and John Robinson was inherited by

Thomas Goodwin. In the Westminster Assembly, he discovered that the Presbyterians had erroneous conceptions as to what the Independents believed concerning democracy. He tried to allay their fears:

according to our principles, the Government is instituted by Christ to be mixt of an Aristocracy of Elders, and a Democracy of the People.³

Across the Atlantic, the New England Independents had a similar kind of government, which was far from being a pure democracy.

a Government meerly Popular or Democraticall (which Divines and Orthodox Writers doe so much condemne in Morillius, and, such like) is farre from the practice of these Churches, and we believe farre from the minde of Christ.⁴

neverthelesse a Government meerly Aristocratical, wherein the Church government is so in the hands of some Elders, as that the rest of the body are wholly excluded from entermedling by way of power therein, such a government we conceive also to be without Warrant of the Word, and likewise to be injurious to the people, as infringing that liberty which Christ hath given to them in choosing their owne Officers, in admitting of Members, and censuring of offenders, even Ministers themselves when they be such.⁵

Independents on both sides of the ocean were interested in preserving the rights of both people and officers. They were far from the extremes of Brownism⁶ which gave the people all the power; and equally far from the tyranny of the prelates who delegated all of the power to the officers.

One of the more curious features of New England Independency was that its view of democracy approximated that of the Scottish Presbyterians.⁷ John Cotton would have been at home in a church north of the border:

Quest. What forme of Government is the Government of the Church.
Answ. The government of the Church is in Christ our head Kingly or regal but in the Church S[t]ewardly and Ministeriall and in both of them Spirituall and heavenly.⁸

Quest. To whom hath Christ committed the Government of his Church?
Answ. Partly to the Body of the Church, in respect of the state or frame of it but principally to the Presbitery, in respect of the Order or Administration of it.⁹

John Cotton was further to the right than Thomas Goodwin in matters of Government and it might be said that his was a mediating position between the moderate English

Congregationalists and the moderate Scottish Presbyterians.

A typical Scottish statement comes from Samuel Rutherford:

in respect of the rulers as Pastours and Elders, it [i.e. the government] is an Aristocracie, the visible government being in the hands of the Elders, and in respect of some things that concerneth the whole members of the visible Church, it is a Democracie, or hath some popular government in it.¹⁰

There is very little difference (if any) between Rutherford, Cotton, and even Thomas Goodwin.

By way of contrast, many English Presbyterians admitted far less democracy into their Church polity than did the Scots or the New England Independents. An aristocracy of elders ruling the churches was their aim, with as little popular rule as possible.¹¹

On February 21, 1644, Richard Vines argued in the Assembly against democracy in favor of aristocracy, saying that "the Greek states in Athens were democratical, the Roman state Aristocratical; the former fell in confusion and rent, not the latter."¹² The only way to avoid the inevitable ruin of democratic anarchy was to invest the power in the hands of an aristocracy of elders ruling in a synod:

In Synods here is no erecting or appointing of an Officer or office in the Church, which Christ hath not appointed. . . but here are onely the Officers appointed by Christ and that forme of government, which is appointed by Christ in his Church, namely, Aristocraticall, here is no varying of the forme of Church government from Aristocraticall to Monarchicall; . . . but the government by synods is most Aristocraticall, whereas the Independent way for the most part is but onely Oligarchicall,¹³ having but a few Officers in a Church, or else Democraticall, if put into the body of the Congregation.¹⁴

The Presbyterian-Independent controversy can therefore hardly be considered a struggle over democracy (as is often alleged). Aristocracy and democracy had a place in the thinking of the leaders from both sides. It is difficult to find those who championed a purely democratic structure. Although some English Presbyterians tended more to an aristocratical government, they were more than offset by the Scots who were willing to admit more democracy than their southern brethren.

Thomas Goodwin's main objections to the excessive aristocratic tendencies of

the Presbyterians centered on his fear of tyranny.¹⁶ He objected to synodical rule, because there was no guarantee that the ablest men would always be chosen to represent the people in the hierarchical assemblies.¹⁷ Unspiritual men must never rule; the saints must rule under Christ. Furthermore, the clergy have never shown themselves capable to rule:

in the greater Bodies of the Clergy, the greater part are, and have been still the worser, and more corrupt, as it is apparent in this Kingdom at present, in which (by vertue of the Presbyteriall Principles) all Ministers must be taken in; and if you will put them out, where will others be had in their room? ¹⁸

Pessimism was a characteristic of Goodwin. The clergy of England were not holy enough to make the Presbyterian aristocratical system work,

Convert Men we cannot, and if not converted, Ministers of all others, are the worst and greatest opposites to Religion: And if a National Assembly be chosen by these, the greater number are like to be of the worst, and such as may alter all that you now have done.¹⁹

The Truth of the Gospel and Purity of Religion, and the power thereof, is contrary to the principles of all Natural Men; and in all Ages the most of the Clergy have been aptest to corrupt the one, and oppose the other.²⁰

Thomas Goodwin was in favor of a democracy only so long as he had confidence in the faith of the enfranchised; he had none in the corrupt clergy of England. This was one of the blind spots of the Scottish Commissioners, who came to London expecting to set their own system to work in the neighbor nation. But Scotland had never had such an inadequate clergy as England boasted of in the 1640's. Consequently, there was not the raw material with which to build the superstructure of a Presbyterian system. The Scots might have been confused by the prevalence of good ministers in London, where conditions were far different than in the provincial areas. During the years of the civil war, the Puritan clergy flocked to London to be installed in the livings of displaced Royalists. Thomas Goodwin had a more realistic view of such things. It was therefore natural that he turned away from a corrupted clergy to a godly communion of covenanted saints within the local church, to whom he was willing to give the voice of ecclesiastical power. His was a majority vote of saints

only, and these in a local church.²¹

Nothing was so close to the heart of Thomas Goodwin's ecclesiastical thought as the emancipation of the people from clerical domination. He resented those who did not give the laity their due, and he was strongly convinced that many Presbyterian writers were guilty of this.²² The Scottish writers were often highly defamatory in their descriptions of church congregations. "The people...are not the principall Members of the Body of Christ," declared Robert Baillie.²³ Popular government could only result in confusion "making the feet above the head."²⁴ Besides, said Baillie, the people should be spending their time working in the fields and sweating for their daily bread; not in deciding ecclesiastical problems.²⁵

George Gillespie, usually moderate in tone, went out of way to refer to the people's voice in church affairs being that of a "rude multitude",²⁶ "a promiscuous multitude",²⁷ or the "rudenesse of the vulgar sort", and a "monstrous and unavoidable confusion."²⁸ "It is well known," he continued, "that in congregations the greater part are not fit to exercise Jurisdiction."²⁹ These are hardly the words to describe the people of God, endowed with the Holy Spirit, and destined to judge angels.

Nor was Samuel Rutherford any more complimentary to the people: "Election [i. e. of officers] is made either by a people gracious and able to discerne, or by a people rude and ignorant; the former is valid...the latter not so."³⁰ In Rutherford's view, only the Presbytery could fit the first definition and only the people the second.

Matthew Poole spoke of the "giddinesse and unrulinesse of Congregations."³¹

Congregationalism had always been synonymous with the people's rights. After Robert Browne had renounced his former colleagues, Barrow and Greenwood, and conformed once again to the Anglican Establishment, he wrote that:

If anie denie power and authoritie to a rash and contentious multitude. to haue their voice and rule, in matters of iudgement, which haue no iudgement, or are parciall and wicked and can not vse their iudgement rightlie, what grosse synne is it ?³²

It is surprising that the Presbyterians of 1640-60 did not quote this against the In-

dependents. The point of view was certainly theirs.

We have already noticed the distaste which Simon Ford held for the Saints of God. To him the saints were only a secondary consideration. They must be kept within certain bounds and the magistrate must assist in the work:

But concerning those...who now most engrosse the name of Saints, as if they had gotten a Patent from the King of Saints to that purpose; let them know, the Scripture never gives Magistrates a stricter charge concerning them, ...then, to keepe them in all their waies. If they destroy foundations of Religion...if they struggle from the Body, when they should march close in it;...if they shall leape over the hedge of Order ...and so endanger, not onely themselves, but the body of their destructive doctrines, examples and practises; ...sure, the Civill Gods may touch them with a penalty, and the Church-Angeles with a censure.³³

Ford's ruling aristocracy (i.e. the "Church-Angeles" and the "Civil Gods") must function primarily for the purpose of keeping the people from rising above their station, whether ecclesiastically or politically.

The antithesis of this idea was put forward by Thomas Goodwin. God smote kings and princes for the sake of a few saints,³⁴ because they were more important even than kings.

Here is the nearness and dearness of the saints unto God. They are dearer to him than kings and states...for their sakes he reproveth kings, and so sheweth that he preferreth them to kings.³⁵

The state and the king that sees this truth is certain of God's blessing.³⁶ All wars are due in one way or another to the persecution of saints.³⁷ Nothing more enhances the glory of Christ than the right treatment of His own.³⁸

Goodwin displayed a highly developed philosophy of the people's place in ecclesiastical affairs. When giving an exegesis of part of the Book of Revelation, he asks:

From whence came this halleluiah? 'I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters.' By waters we are to understand the people: The voice of many waters, of many people.³⁹

The influence of the book of Revelation on the thinking of Goodwin appears strongest in his discussion of the people's place in reformation.⁴⁰

The voice of Jesus Christ reigning in his church, comes first from the multitude, the commonpeople;... God uses the common people and the multitude to proclaim that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. As when Christ came at first, the poor receive the gospel; not many wise, not many noble, not many rich, but the poor; so in the reformation of religion after antichrist began to be discovered, it was the common people that first came to look after Christ.⁴¹

The prelates had neglected the common people; Goodwin would elevate them, vindicate their place in the economy of God, and give them the power which others had misused for so long.

You that are of the meaner rank, common people, be not discouraged, for God intends to make use of the common people in the great work of proclaiming the kingdom of his dear Son: the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The voice that will come of Christ's reigning is like to begin from those that are the multitude, that are so contemptible, especially in the eyes and account of antichrists' spirits, and the prelacy, the vulgar multitude, the common people. What more contemned in their mouths than they! and yet it is from them that this voice doth come, 'The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.'⁴²

Goodwin's motivation came from the Puritan experience with Laudian excesses. For him, Presbyterians had not turned far enough away from those who had but recently held the people in chains. It was unlikely that a government of predominantly aristocratic tendencies should have any appeal to such a person.

The issues involving democracy in church government were rightly seen to lie at the basis of Presbyterian-Independent troubles, even though both professed to have a mixed polity. Unless agreement could be reached about popular government and that it

ought not to be committed to the whole collective body thereof [i.e. in a particular congregation] but is peculiar to the Eldership representing the same [then] in vaine doe wee debate the other point concerning Presbyteries and Assemblies if this latent prejudice still occupy their minds, that the Government of the Church must needs be popular, exercised by the collective body, which happily may in some sort be done within the bounds of a well limited Congregation, but is manifestly inconsistent with classical Presbyteries and Synods.⁴³

George Gillespie saw the importance of the Independent arguments placing power in the body of the faithful, and he believed that this was one of the main differences between Presbyterians and Independents; the one giving church power to the elder-

ship, the other to the congregation.

Presbyterian fears concerning popular government were sometimes voiced with a crusading intensity. Daniel Cawdry accused John Owen of switching from "hierarchical tyranny" to "democratical confusion".⁴⁴ And Robert Baillie remarked that the only way to insure against democracy was through the adoption of Presbyterianism: "The Presbiterie is a great barre to keep out Democracy and Tyrannie, both from Church and State."⁴⁵

The connection between democracy in the church and democracy in the State became one of the guiding lights of Presbyterian criticisms of Independent popular government.⁴⁶ If any "liked Anarchy better then Monarchy, and... would turn a Kingdom into a Democracy", then such ideas were considered by the Scots "to be but the fictions and calumnies of the malicious enemies of God and His Truth."⁴⁷

Richard Baxter reported on democratic ideas in the army: "I found many honest men of ignorance and weak judgments seduced into a disputing vein, to talking for Church democracy or State democracy."⁴⁸

Any understanding of Presbyterian hatred of democratic concepts must take into account the deeply rooted conviction that monarchy was instigated by God. An Independent such as Thomas Goodwin might advert to the responsibility of kings to obey God's commands, as well as servants,⁴⁹ but this was hardly enough to describe Presbyterian reverence for crowned heads.⁵⁰ Even though the Scots joined with the Parliamentary forces against Charles I, yet they never intended to harm their sovereign, but only to chastise him into giving more ecclesiastical liberty. On 30th of July, 1643, Robert Baillie wrote these revealing words: "The Armyes are making for ane new battell; the Lord save the King and all his family from the least evill."⁵¹ A few months later the Scottish armies themselves were on the field moving against Charles's forces. Presbyterians might resist the prelatical foolishness of their king, but they certainly would never have substituted a democracy for a monarchy. In fact, the Westminster Assembly "declared unanimously for the release of the King" when

Hugh Peters tried to get their approval for his execution many years later.⁵²

Richard Baxter's attempts to reconcile Presbyterians and Independents in affairs of democratic practice were noble but impotent to prevail against fears of anarchy and rebellion which the former attributed to the latter.

Some say the people are to govern by vote. I confess, if this were understood as it were spoken, according to the proper sense of the word and practised accordingly, it were contrary to the express commands of scripture, which command the elders to rule well and the people to obey them as ruling in the Lord; and it seems to me to be destructive to the being of a political church, whose constitutive parts are the ruling and the ruled parts. But I perceive the moderate mean not any such things as these words in their proper sense, import. They only would have the Church ruled as a free people and in a due subordination to Christ.⁵³

The Kidderminster preacher accused the Independents of making the people "by majority of votes to be Church Governors" which was a confusion of office.⁵⁴

The charge that popular government resulted in a confounding of ruled and rulers was commonly made by Presbyterian apologists:

- Q. How does it appear that no power of authority is lodged in the body of the people, the private members of the Church?
- A. Although every church member has a right to all the spiritual privileges purchased with the Saviour's blood, and given to the church, as need requires; altho' he has a right to try the spirits, and to prove all things by the word of God; a power to choose the church officers who are immediately to rule over him; yet the Holy Scriptures allow the exercise of no official power to the private members of the Church. The scripture no where ascribes to the people any such characteristics as imply authority lodged in them; but the contrary. Instead of being stiled pastors, they are called the flock, watched over and fed; instead of overseers, the family overseen; instead of rulers, guides, governors, they are called the body governed, the persons subject in the Lord, and they are solemnly charged to know, honour, obey and submit to those that are over them.⁵⁵

Such characterization of the Independent position was not wholly accurate, because Congregationalists also believed that the people were to respect their officers and to submit in the Lord to their rule.⁵⁶

SECTION B: THE ELECTION OF MINISTERS

Calvin's successors were true to his principles in giving each congregation the authority to choose its own officers.⁵⁷ We have already noted the interesting phenomenon of an Independent, Henry Jacob, building his case for the people's free consent against the prelates, on the foundation of John Calvin and other reformers.⁵⁸ Following Calvin, Thomas Cartwright also taught that each congregation had the sovereign right to elect and to approve its own ministers.⁵⁹ And although there were isolated individuals who might erroneously accuse the Presbyterians of disagreeing with this principle,⁶⁰ yet the truth was far from such accusations. Alexander Henderson described conditions in Scotland: "no man is here obtruded upon the people against their open or tacite consent and approbation."⁶¹ Charles Herle wished it were so in England: "we acknowledge that the Pastors and other Officers were anciently, and 'tis to be wished they still were chosen (at least) consented to by the members of each respective Congregation."⁶² And Rutherford said that "the government of Christs Kingdome is the most free and willing government on earth; . . . all the people by consent and voluntary agreement have hand in election of Officers." References could be multiplied on this issue and all to the same result.⁶⁴

Independents and the Scottish commissioners were in hearty agreement over the matter of the people electing their own officers. The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order provided that officers should be elected by "common suffrage of the Church it self."⁶⁵ In New England, the churches judged that it was "lawfull and convenient that every Church of Christ . . . should elect and choose their Ministers."⁶⁶ And although John Cotton was no friend to pure democracy, yet he vigorously championed the people's rights to elect their own ministers:

Quest. What power of Government is committed to the body of the Church ?

Ans. The body of the Church hath power from Christ to choose, and call her owne Officers.⁶⁷

The one noticeable difference between moderate Independents and Scottish Presbyterians regarding election by the people was over the place of the presbytery to regulate elections by the people. Presbyterians spoke of election subject to the approv-

al of the presbytery. This was highly unacceptable to most Independents:

these reformists, howsoever, for fashions sake, they give the People a little liberty, to sweeten their mouths, and make them believe that they should choose their own ministers; yet even in this pretended choice do they cozen and beguile them also leaving them nothing but the smoky, windy title of election only; enjoining them to choose some University clerk; one of these college-birds of their own brood; or else, comes a synod in the neck of them, and annihilated the election, whatsoever it be.⁶⁸

This accuser would scarcely have known his successors under Cromwell, sixty years later because Thomas Goodwin and others of the Independent leaders showed themselves to be close to the Presbyterian idea of supervised elections. In the 1650's

Oliver set up a committee of "Triers" who were to examine candidates who wished to enter the ministry. Goodwin was one of these triers, whose basic aim was to rid the ministry of corrupt clergy and to install godly men in their stead. Being contrary to the concept of election by particular congregations, these "triers" operated over the heads of the local churches. No one saw the inconsistency of the "triers" more clearly than John Goodwin, who likened them to anti-christ.⁶⁹ The root idea of the

committee, said John Goodwin, was against the fundamental rights of the people to elect whomever they wished.⁷⁰ John pointed out that Thomas was guilty of a breach

of faith.⁷¹ The said commissioners...entrench upon the spiritual rights and privileges of the people of God, and they are worse than the old system of benefactors and patrons which Puritans have always cried down.⁷² Even the Bishops were no worse than these.⁷³

Never was there such a rule-less, law-less, controuleless generation of men set up in this Nation over the Lords people in it: never was there the like unsufferable yolk of slavery fastened about the necks of the free born people here, as the power given by Commission unto, or at least claimed and exercised by, these men, upon pretence of such Commission.

The indication is that Thomas Goodwin was more concerned about the corrupt clergy in England than in a meticulously consistent practice of the people's rights. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that just as Thomas had been dubious about the piety of the clergy fifteen years before, so he became more convinced of the paucity of real saints in England as time went on. It is possible to trace a mounting

pessimism in his thinking that more and more forced his so-called Independent principles into Presbyterian molds.

SECTION C: THE POWER OF THE KEYS

As a result of (or perhaps the reason for) different emphases between Presbyterians and Independents upon the people and the officers of the Church, most of the argument over democracy stemmed from the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Presbyterians gave the power to the presbytery; Independents to the congregation. Over this issue, Kipling's "east is east and west is west and never the twain shall meet" could well be uttered.

The problem was indicative of the entire discussion between the two groups of Puritans and it laid bare the divergent directions of both. One sought to protect the prerogatives of the multitude of the saints; the other to insure that the leadership of the Church should always be given to the most spiritual.

We begin with the Presbyterian view:

if the keyes and government of the Church be given to all believers, because they are all made Kings, Priests and Prophets, and we are made free and redeemed in Christ, and all things are made ours, Therefore I may well inferre upon the same grounds, the keys of civill power to be Kings temporall and freemen civilly are made ours, if all things be ours, and so no Magistrate, no Captain, no souldier (peace and liberty are ours) no master or servant. 75

To give the power of the keys to the people could only end in confusion, anarchy, and reversal of God's ecclesiastical order... and when by means of a non sequitur argument the danger spread to the political realm, Presbyterians felt that they had good reason to reject the claim. It was nothing more than a defense of the kingdom to make sure of the proper use of the keys.

Dr. Ainslie has alluded to the keys being given to the reformed ministry, because of their connection with preaching. Since only the minister could preach, it followed that only the minister could exercise discipline and the use of the keys. 76

According to Apollonius, the reformed churches taught that the keys were "for the benefit of the whole Church, and of all believers" and all had a right to help in the choosing of their officers.⁷⁷ But by this election, "the believers doe not conferre or derive the power of the Keyes on the Ministers or Pastours chosen."⁷⁸

Independents, on the other hand, placed the power of the keys in the hands of the congregation, even if many of them stipulated that only the officers were to exercise it. "Each Congregation compleatly constituted of all Officers, hath sufficient power in her self, to exercise the power of the keyes, and all Church discipline, in all the censures thereof."⁷⁹

William Dell had a mystical philosophy of the keys which almost separated their use from any connection with organized visible churches:

these Keys are not given to any particular person or persons, consisting of flesh and blood... but that man, whoever he be, that hath the Revelation of the Father, he it is, to whome these Keys are given, and to none else; and so they are given to each Believer in particular and to the whole Church of Believers, in general.⁸⁰

Although his position was orthodox so far as the saints' rights were concerned, it was worded rather strangely for an orthodox Independent. John Owen's was better stated:

The calling of bishops, pastors, or elders, is an act of the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. But these keys are originally and properly given unto the whole church, unto the elders of it only ministerially, and as unto exercise.⁸¹

The power of the keys was a subject which Thomas Goodwin discussed at length.⁸²

A Congregational Church, is by Christ's Institution the only Subject, and Seat of Church Government; and the Grand Charter of the Power of the Keys is granted to it alone.⁸³

Presbyterians had contended that the keys were given to the universal visible church.⁸⁴ But Goodwin contended that this was inconsistent with the Reformed practice of connecting the keys to preaching. The universal church cannot assemble, cannot celebrate the Lord's Supper, and cannot hear preaching together. Therefore, the keys should not be given to it, since the "General Assembly" will only meet in heaven where there will be no further purpose in exercising the power of the keys.⁸⁵ The im-

portant consideration, to Thomas Goodwin, was not to usurp any of the crown rights of the King of Saints operating through individual churches of believers:

The Grand Charter of Church-Government, or the power of the Keys, is granted not to Ministers in particular only excluding the People, but to the whole Body of Believers.⁸⁶

But this does not mean that there is to be promiscuity and lack of orderly control among the members of each particular Church.

All the Members of the Church have some Interest in the Power of Keys, but it is specially delegated to them that are Stewards by Office for admission of Members into the Church, that is, to open the Doors of God's House.⁸⁷

It is probable that Presbyterians might have been willing to compromise on this position had they understood it.

One query which might be raised concerning the Presbyterian refusal to give the power of the keys to the congregation was the part which women might have in such a situation. We have already seen how women were forbidden the right to preach in most Puritan churches, and how the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers failed to emancipate the layman so that he could prophesy. There can be little doubt that Presbyterians feared women usurping authority so much that it influenced their exegesis of key passages of scripture.⁸⁸ Rutherford speaks sarcastically of a woman taking the gospel to a foreign land before a duly qualified minister.⁸⁹ Baillie and Edwards ridiculed Sidrach Simpson's church in Rotterdam, because it had been founded by a woman.⁹⁰ To allow women any ecclesiastical rights was to invite the kiss of death, as far as Presbyterians were concerned. The London ministers interpreted Acts 15 (the so-called synod of Jerusalem) to mean only the "apostles and elders" when it speaks of the "whole church"; because it was inconceivable that women should have had a part in the affairs of the meeting.⁹¹ Daniel Cawdrey denied that Matthew 18 could refer to a particular church, because that would enfranchise women.⁹² And Robert Baillie concluded that the excommunication in I Corinthians 5 could not have been done by the whole congregation because women must not have any part in such transactions.⁹³ Puritan prejudice and Puritan exegesis often journeyed hand in

hand.

Presbyterians allowed their preconceptions regarding women's rights to interfere with their doctrine of the keys. Whatever else the Independents might do, Robert Baillie hoped that "it be not the extent of Church power unto women."⁹⁴ The logic of the Independent's argument led inexorably toward the enfranchisement of women and the Presbyterians made this the brunt of their attack on democracy. Women were never to be allowed to vote.⁹⁵

There were several debates in the Westminster Assembly over the "churching of women".⁹⁶ In these debates, the Independent position on the keys was assailed on the issue of women. Presbyterian defenders were quick to see that if all believers had the Keys, then logically women were not excluded from their use. Thomas Goodwin was pushed into a corner during several of these debates and tried to "distinguish the general church, so that the power may not be to women, children and all."⁹⁷ It happened again, on September 30, 1644, in the Committee on Accommodation, "By ecclesia we...mean the brethren, excluding women and children;"⁹⁸ The moderate Independents were no more willing to enfranchise women than their Presbyterian opponents,⁹⁹ but it was sometimes difficult to justify their position. Goodwin, for instance, has a rather lengthy explanation which seems to be nothing more than a rationalization of an untenable position :

The mistake of the Objection [i.e. that if all believers have the keys, then women too] lies in this, to infer that, because Women have not the Authority, the publick power of the keys; that therefore they have no pow[er] of the keys committed to them.¹⁰⁰

Such tight-rope walking was dangerous as well as susceptible to Presbyterian attacks which often caused the rope to sway in the wind. A distinction between "authority" and "power" was a semantical problem with little possibility of being resolved to the mutual satisfaction of any save the compromised Independents.

The keys of the kingdom of heaven were not only to be used to admit people into the membership of the church, but they were also to be exercised in disciplinary

cases. Excommunication and public censures were important matters to the Puritan, and the place of the general membership in these actions was the center around which many of the debates over the keys orbited.¹⁰¹

Few Presbyterians would have denied the people a right of consent or dissent in points of discipline, but they always refused to allow them the principal authority in that discipline:

Though the people have not Ministerial or governing power, yet they are to have a judgement of discretion, and thereby to try and discern, whether they that do cast out, or Absolve by Ministerial Authoritative Declaration, do proceed according to God's word or not, and are not to obey any sentence or injunction that is contrary to that word; yet must they not on the pretence disobey or refuse to execute such injunctions and Censures without manifesting their proofs of its Error.¹⁰²

Baxter would have denied any but a nominal power to the people. Theirs was to obey ministerial acts of discipline and not to initiate such acts. However, he was willing to admit that the people had been so overborn in times past that they ought to be given a little more power than ordinarily was granted to them:

Because all this forementioned Discipline cannot be exercised without the people's consent... and we have at present no full recovery of their consent: And because Ministers should have a particular knowledge of their charge, which is now uncertain, and for divers other reasons propounded, and debated among us, we judge it very fit, if not of necessity to desire a more expresse signification of our people's consent to our Ministry, and Ministerial actions, and in particular to submit to this Discipline, as the members of that particular Church.¹⁰³

Such magnanimity on Baxter's part was only temporary. He made it quite plain that such compromises were only for the "present" time and because of exigency.

Gillespie, too, was willing to forego the sentence of excommunication if the people dissented from it: "the end of excommunication cannot be attained if the Church doe not consent thereto",¹⁰⁴ but even this was a compromise. Presbyterians wanted the sentence of excommunication given into the hands of their Presbytery with right of appeal to higher assemblies.

One of the strongest reasons why Presbyterians did not want the whole congregation to have the power of censures, was in order to insure that the spiritual

leadership of the church remained in the hands of those best qualified to discern difficult cases.

If all the people...are to watch over one another...then must they in Conscience attend the judging of all causes, of adultery, fornication, drunkenness, swearing, oppressing, defrauding one another, as they fall under scandall.¹⁰⁵

This eventuality was somewhat ameliorated by the Independent insistence on regenerate church membership, but to the Presbyterian concept of the church multitudinous, it was well nigh a fatal blow. Nothing could be more scandalous than for unregenerate, and unspiritual men to attempt to judge of spiritual censures. This must be undertaken by those suited to the task.

Independent teaching on this subject insisted on the people's part as inherent in any operation of discipline. It was not just a temporary expedient (like Baxter) nor was it a compromise of the ideal situation (like Gillespie). "The body of the Church hath power from Christ...to inquire and hear and assist in the Judgment of all publicke scandalls," put forth Cotton.¹⁰⁶ But these censures are still the duty of the officers in the presbytery who are to "administer ordinations and Censures."¹⁰⁷

It is probable that Thomas Goodwin was much influenced in his doctrine of ecclesiastical discipline by the Franeker professor, but beyond the aegis of William Ames lay the Calvinian idea of the government of the Church by the preaching of the Word. Goodwin's position of confining ecclesiastical censures to local churches and giving them into the hands of the congregation was nearer the true reformed spirit than the concept of appeals lodged in higher and higher courts always to be handled by the officers and never by the people. In

publick Admonitions...the people have an interest, that they may be edified thereby, as well as by preaching; for what is Discipline or publick Admonitions, but a publick Application of the Truths of the Word of God, to the Conscience of a scandalous sinner, to warn others, and to bring him unto Repentance? So as indeed acts of Discipline, Admonitions are the most pastoral Sermon; and so are a part of the Worship of God, which therefore the people of his own Church, must have a peculiar interest in, as they have in other Sermons.¹⁰⁸

Once again, the Crown rights of the Redeemer working through individual saints

within congregations are protected. Few Puritans were more zealous of the Saints' prerogatives than Thomas Goodwin. That is why the people must have a part in the power of discipline...because it is a means of their edification, a special kind of sermon.

SECTION D: ORDINATION IN RELATION TO ECCLESIASTICAL DEMOCRACY

Although Richard Baxter felt that differences over the power of ordination could be "easily Reconciled" between the Presbyterians and Independents,¹⁰⁹ the Westminster debates show a very sharp cleavage on the issue. Unfounded optimism was one of the Kidderminster preacher's proclivities.

The divines at the Westminster Assembly found that some of their most violent arguments and their closest votes were concerning ordination. The validity of Episcopal ordination, the problem of proper ordination versus expediency where evangelism is paramount, one aspect of the ex dono versus an ex officio controversy, can one church ordain or must there be more than one, the people's right in ordination, the relationship between election and the formal laying on of hands, ---all of these were heatedly discussed by the Puritan assembly.

Episcopal orders was one of the subjects which recurred again and again. Most of the divines at Westminster (at least the English ones) had been ordained by the bishops¹¹⁰ and this fact alone encouraged disagreement amongst the Scots and the Southern neighbors. In the debates, it was usually the Independents who defended Anglican orders. One of Philip Nye's arguments against the Solemn League and Covenant was that the document infringed on the Bishop's right to ordain,¹¹¹ which was disliked by Alexander Henderson and the other Scots. The Erastian, Selden, reminded the divines that the laws of England made ordination by bishops lawful and that if the Covenant meant to establish any other, then the Covenant was contrary to the laws of the land.¹¹² Gillespie tells us that on Mar. 20, 1644, the Independents dis-

sented to a letter sent from the assembly to the Earl of Manchester "desiring more pity and favour to those that scruple the validity of their ordination by bishops."¹¹³ Evidently, some of the Presbyterians were trying to compromise their brethren who had not yet renounced their ministerial orders. And the crowning event occurred on April 17, 1644, when Thomas Goodwin accused Samuel Rutherford of having nullified Episcopal ordination in one of his books.¹¹⁴ Outside the Assembly, there were many Independents who did not agree with their leaders.¹¹⁵

One of the really pressing issues at the Assembly was the immediate supply of godly, qualified ministers and preachers to fill the empty pulpits in the land and to undertake the spiritual care of the troops in the field. The problem became more and more acute as debate dragged on with nothing being decided. Right wing Presbyterians kept insisting on a properly ordained ministry, even at the expense of not having enough of them; moderate Independents as well as moderate Presbyterians were willing to compromise and to admit gifted but unordained men to fill the gap that the work of evangelism be not neglected. Lightfoot records that on Oct. 20th, 1643, Young and Seaman spoke in favor of using unordained ministers temporarily until the Assembly could decide the issue on a permanent basis, but Gouge, Gattaker, and Palmer all were violently opposed to it.¹¹⁶ On January 26th, 1644, Philip Nye defended the same thesis that the moderate Presbyterians had championed three months previously; namely, that ordination was unnecessary in extraordinary situations such as England was presently in.¹¹⁷ By March, 1644, Stephen Marshall was all but convinced that if England waited for the Assembly to act, there would never be any ministers provided for the kingdom. He now sponsored the use of unordained, but gifted men as chaplains. Palmer absolutely refused to go along with this proposal, however, unless such men were duly ordained.¹¹⁸ To Palmer and his stubborn associates goes much of the credit for the eventual Presbyterian defeat,¹¹⁹ because the Independents later captured the army when the Presbyterians neglected it by flocking into the lavish city parishes. It was in the debates of March

19th, 1644, that the embarrassing case of Apollos was first discussed.¹²⁰ If Apollos was not ordained, then he preached out of orders; but if he was ordained, then he was a minister without proper education (one of the first prerequisites for Presbyterian laying on of hands). It was the horns of a dilemma pure and simple. In the discussion of Jan 15th, 1645/6, we find the Independent, Jeremiah Burroughs, extremely concerned about the supply of ministers in places where they were scarce...even if it meant sending unordained men.¹²¹ To the Independents, formal ordination was not nearly so important as the need of the lost souls to hear the gospel by whatever means available. Their case was aptly put in William Bridge's fast sermon of Oct. 28, 1646:

The Harvest is great, the Labourers few, but the work is necessary, for poore ignorant soules to bee delivered from the wrath to come. What through every formality cannot be had now, which you would have at another time? Sure, 'tis necessary that men and women should bee delivered from the wrath to come.¹²²

Even the Independents would have done the work of providing ministers differently if they had had ideal conditions, but the kingdom was on fire and the work was urgent. Many Presbyterians outside the Assembly were even more "orderly" than Palmer and his confederates. They believed that the primary reason for England's multitude of sects and heresies was the laxness in admitting men into the Christian ministry. Nathaniel Hardy, preacher to the parish of Dionis-Back church, addressed Parliament at their monthly fast day, Feb. 24th, 1646, and warned the law makers to "effectually prohibit all from entring into the work of the Ministry but by the doore of Ordination; let not those be admitted to sit in Moses chair, who have not first sate at Gamaliels feet."¹²³ Richard Vines also attacked false prophets who spread error; prophets who had not been properly ordained. According to him, the best cure for heresy was the establishment of an orderly system of ordination.¹²⁴ Hearty agreement with this sentiment was voiced by Matthew Poole, one of the most outspoken Presbyterians of the time on this subject.

Whether Gifted persons may preach ordinarily without Ordination
 ... the assertion of this Doctrine was that which opened the gap
 unto all that crew, and which hath been the unhappy occasion of
 involving this poor Church and Nation in those ¹²⁵crowds of errors
 and confusion which are now too rise amongst us.

Two other areas of disagreement separated Presbyterians and Independents over the matter of ordination and admission into the Christian ministry. The first was the question of whether one church (or its eldership) could ordain without the help of other sister churches. Congregationalists affirmed the principle, but orthodox Presbyterians denied it. This was one of the bones of contention in the debates at the Westminster Assembly and the Independents lost the battle by only the narrowest of votes. Lightfoot tells us that the discussion of this proposition (May 6th to 10th 1644) was "managed with the most heat and confusion of anything that ever happened among us."¹²⁶ The vote was 27 to 19 against the Independents.¹²⁷ George Gillespie was aghast to discover that even Stephen Marshall had evidently been won over to the Independent position.¹²⁸ On April 5th, 1644, George Gillespie and Thomas Goodwin debated the question as to whether or not a single Congregational eldership could ordain.¹²⁹ Presbyterians, with their doctrine of the universal visible church, insisted on the right of ordination being given to the combined eldership of more than one church. Their Congregational brethren, who rejected a universal visible body, agreed to this much Presbyterianism: "wee exclude not the Elders or Ministers of other neighbouring congregations from joyning in that worke, for the assistance especially in prayer, for a blessing upon the new chosen Minister."¹³⁰

A second area of disagreement between Synodical men and Congregational men concerned the proper relationship between election and ordination. The former tended to make ordination more important than election. "The essence of the call doth not lie in the Election of the people, but in the Ordination of the Ministers."¹³¹ The latter said that there was no proper ordination unless it had been preceded by election. "Ordination is not before election. . ."¹³² This was one of the things which prompted so much discussion of Acts 14:23 and the Greek word *Χειροτονια* ... whether it meant "election or "ordination". The bishops had always held out

for the latter meaning, but George Gillespie championed the former along with the Independents. And if election comes before ordination, then the question of the people's place in the setting aside of the gospel ministry is broached. That such a possibility should ever be dreamed of was repugnant to the Presbyterian mind anxious to defend the ministry against the encroachments of the common people of God. Baillie wrote: "an authoritative mission imports a Superiority in the Sender above the Sent. But, the Pastors are over the People, not under them."¹³³ Rutherford feared that if the people alone can elect a minister (and ordain him), then "From whence had Luther, Calvin, and our blessed Reformers their calling to the pastorall charge."¹³⁴ The primary documents of the Westminster Assembly reveal that the Independents led one of their most effective campaigns against the Presbyterian propositions on ordination.¹³⁵ In addition, they all but succeeded in keeping the assembly from voting the power of ordination to the London ministers.¹³⁶

SUMMARY

Seventeenth century Puritanism was a mine from which many of the precious jewels of democracy have been dug. The Presbyterian-Independent controversy became one of the tools with which these truths were laboriously cracked off the massive rock of tyranny where they had long been imprisoned.

Presbyterians and Independents alike sought to define the limits of liberty within the bounds of order, the former wishing to have a democratic polity without giving up their essential aristocracy, the latter attempting to have an aristocratic polity without relinquishing their essential democracy.

The outstanding feature of the ensuing struggle was the problem of the laity in relation to the ministry, and how to emancipate the one without endangering the status of the other.

Puritan democratic tendencies can be seen in their insistence on the people's right to elect their own officers within each particular church. Agreement on this point was not unanimous, however. Scottish Presbyterians and English Congregationalists stood over against many undemocratic English Presbyterians.

Few questions produced more discussion than the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Presbyterians were willing to allow the people to vote for their officers, but not in disciplinary actions; Independents were willing for the people to vote in both instances. But both groups ran into peculiar difficulties when the status of women was broached, for none wished to enfranchise them. But how could they be excluded on the basis of

the priesthood of all believers? Any solution to this query compromised those who resorted to capricious and illogical explanations.

Ordination brought the Puritans' concept of democracy into a sharp encounter with their concept of the ministry. The issue was whether the servant of God (i.e. a minister of the gospel) came from above or below. Did he come immediately from God, or mediately from the people? The origin of his office was no less important than the essence of his call. An ex dono versus ex officio ministry characterized the dichotomy of the two Puritan parties and the people's prerogative in either (or both) determined their Presbyterianism or their Congregationalism.

¹Cited in R.W.Dale, History of English Congregationalism (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1907), p.208.

²William Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the holy Scriptures and the Interpreters thereof. and brought into Method (London: n.d.). p.145.

³Thomas Goodwin, Of the Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ, Works (1696 ed), IV, p.95. Many of the contributions of Goodwin to the debates are found in this book which unfortunately was not published for a half century after the close of the Westminster Assembly.

⁴Richard Mather, Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed, In an Answer of the Elders of the severall Churches in New-England To two and thirty Questions, sent over to them by divers Ministers in England to declare their judgments therein. etc. (London: 1643) .pp.47.48. The authors of this tract had already admitted that "Christ hath ordained that there should be a Presbytery or Eldership ... in every Church (Loc. cit.) Robert Baillie referred to Morellius as "the first Patron of Democracie and popular government in the Church." Vide the Dissuasive, op. cit., p.181.

⁵Mather, op. cit., p.48.

⁶Robert Browne was perhaps not so close to radical democracy as is generally supposed. Horton Davies maintains that Browne listened for the vox Dei and not just the vox populi. His was a Christocracy, not a democracy. Vide English Free Churches, op. cit., p.52. Cf. Henry W. Clark, History of English Nonconformity from Wiclif to the Close of the Nineteenth Century (London: Chapman and Hall, Limited, 1911),p.198.

⁷A study of the relationship between New England Independency and Scottish Presbyterianism in the middle of the seventeenth century would reveal a startling number of similarities. One of these would be their views of democracy. On John Knox's republican ideas, vide Gooch, op. cit., p.97.

⁸John Cotton, The True Constitution of A particular visible Church, proved by Scripture, Wherein is briefly Demonstrated By Questions and Answers what Officers, Worship, and Government Christ hath ordained in his Church. (London:1642), p.8.

⁹Ibid., p. 9. The extent of the people's liberty in relation to the rule and authority of the eldership was a source of disagreement between Cotton and Thomas Goodwin. Vide John Cotton, The Keyes Of the Kingdom of Heaven, And Power thereof, according to the Word of God. etc. (London: 1644). This tract was published by Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye. On p. 9ff, several points of disagreement between Goodwin and Cotton are listed. Goodwin thought that Cotton did not give enough power to the people: "without the consent and concurrence of both elders and people nothing is esteemed as a Church act." (p. 9f.) "In this company of Elders, this power is properly authority: but in the people is a privilege or power." (Loc. cit.). Nevertheless, Goodwin is anxious for the people to respect their officers or elders (p. 12ff.) and desires "a government tempered of an aristocracy and democracy." (p. 12) albeit with more democracy than Cotton allowed. I have used an edition of the Keys published in Boston, by Tappan and Dennet, 1843.

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Samuel Rutherford, A Peaceable and Temperate Plea For Paul's Presbyterie in Scotland, etc. (London: 1642), p. 63.

11

Richard Baxter said that "we will grant a use of Voting in the Church (though I would have as little need of it as I could)". Vide Church Concord: etc. (London: 1691), p. 31. The author distastes democracy of the Independent's variety. (p. 25ff.) There were so many Presbyterians with such feelings that Robert Baillie attempted to whitewash the whole situation: "As for them who of late have begun to put the whole authority in the officers alone, and to give the people onely a liberty of consenting to what the Officers doe decree of their owne authority, we say they are but few that doe so, and these contradictory to themselves." Vide Dissuasive, op. cit., p. 188. Independents evidently thought there were more of these radicals than Baillie admitted and even W. M. Hetherington History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (ed. by Robert Williamson, Edinburgh: James Gemmell, 1878, fourth edition), p. 205 seems to support the Congregational contentions.

¹²George Gillespie, Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster. etc. (ed. by David Meek, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846), p. 27.

¹³Henry Burton, A Vindication, op. cit., p. 25, reverses this accusation against the Presbyterians by calling their system an "Oligarchill Tyranny".

¹⁴Thomas Edwards, Reasons against the Independant Government of Particular Congregations: etc. (London: 1541), p. 16. A major shift in Presbyterian defences has been made by R. M'Cheyne Edgar, in his Progressive Presbyterianism, op. cit., p. 99ff., Chap. VIII, called "Presbyterianism Democratic, Not Aristocratic, In Its Spirit." Seventeenth century Presbyterians would have read this with astonishment and even Edgar admits that many moderns would disagree with him.

¹⁶Goodwin feared tyranny such as that expressed by Charles I on the scaffold: "their liberty [i.e. the people's] and freedom consists in having government... by which their lives and their sic may be most their own; it is not in having a share in government, that is nothing pertaining to them." As reported by George Bates and Thomas Skinner, in The History of the Rise and Progress of the Civil Wars in England, from the Year 1625, to 1660. (second edition, London: 1688, translated from the Latin by Archibald Lovell - a "person of quality", p. 156. Charles's notion was that liberty consisted in having government, not sharing in it.

¹⁷Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), op. cit., p.218, IV.

¹⁸Ibid., p.220. ¹⁹Loc. cit. ²⁰Ibid., p.221.

²¹Some of the best thoughts on the subject of democracy to be found in Thomas Goodwin's Works are in the sections where he deals with the subordination of synods, p.221 et passim, Vol. IV, op. cit.

²²Cf. Gooch, op. cit., p.143, "In every Presbyterian writer from Calvin downwards, while the People are exalted, the Plebs are treated with scanty respect."

²³Baillie, Dissuasive, op. cit., p.184.

²⁴Ibid., p.185.

²⁵Ibid., p.187.

²⁶George Gillespie, An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland, etc. (Edinburgh: 1641), p.114.

²⁷Ibid., p.29.

²⁸Loc. cit.

²⁹Ibid., p.112.

³⁰Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries or, A Peaceable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland (London: 1644), p.180.

³¹Matthew Poole, A Moderate Enquiry into the Warrantableness of the Preaching of Gifted and Unordained Persons. (London: n.d.), p.140. Cf. Lord Brooke's couplet, cited in Gooch, op. cit., p.52:

How can the democratical content,
Where that blind multitude chief master is ?

³²Robert Browne's Retraction, p.30, cited by Dwight Chichester Smith, "Robert Browne (1550?-1633) as Churchman and Theologian," (unpublished thesis at New College, University of Edinburgh, 1936), p.354.

³³Simon Ford, The Great Interest of States and Kingdomes. The Second Part. A Sermon Preached on a Publike Thanksgiving on the 12th of May, 1646. at Botolphs Alders-gate: And after (up on the desire of some friends) enlarged at Pauls Church in Covent-garden, on the Lords Day, May 17th, 1646 (London: 1646), p.2.

³⁴Thomas Goodwin, The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms. A Sermon Preached at the Late Fast Before the Commons House of Parliament. Feb. 25, 1645 (Works, 1866 ed.), p.34, XII.

³⁵Ibid., p.36.

³⁶Ibid., pp.36,37.

³⁷Ibid., p.49.

³⁸Ibid., p.53. It soon becomes evident that Thomas Goodwin's notion of toleration extended only so far as the true saints of God. They alone have a right to be free. Goodwin was not a genuine democrat.

³⁹ Thomas Goodwin, A Glimpse of Zion's Glory; or, the Church's Beauty Specified. Briefly layd open in a Sermon, at a general Fast day in Holland. (London: 1641), p. 66, Vol. XII (Works, 1866).

⁴⁰ Cf. Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p. 483, "Reformation the peoples duty, though the Prince dissent." In Scotland, the reformation had begun from the people and spread upwards; in England, it had begun at the top and spread downwards. Cujus regio eius religio was not the rule which Knox and his successors followed and this became one more point of affinity between scottish Presbyterians and English Independents, i.e. their belief in the people's right to reform the church if the ruler refused to do it. This could also account for the prevalence of more democratic ideas among the Scots than among English Presbyterians.

⁴¹ Goodwin, A Glimpse, op. cit., p. 66.

⁴² Ibid., p. 67.

⁴³ Gillespie, Assertion, op. cit., p. 109. Cf. Samuel Rutherford, A Peaceable and Temperate Plea For Paul's Presbyterie In Scotland, etc. (London: 1642), prop. no. 6.

⁴⁴ Daniel Cawdrey, Independencie A Great Schism: Proved Against Dr. Owen his Apology in his first Tract of Schism. etc. (London: 1657), p. 219f.

⁴⁵ Robert Baylie, An Historical Vindication of the Government of the Church of Scotland (London: 1646), p. 64.

⁴⁶ Samuel Rutherford shows the connection between ecclesiastical and political government in his The Preeminence of the Election of Kings, etc. (London: 1648), p. 53. Cf. Gooch, op. cit., p. 249, "Where civil liberty is entire it includes liberty of conscience; where liberty of conscience is entire, it includes civil liberty," citing Harrington's Political Aphorisms, p. 484; et Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Visible Saints (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 102, who also mentions the connection between tyranny in religion and tyranny in politics. One usually results in the other.

⁴⁷ So said Alexander Henderson, in his The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh: 1690), p. 56. This was originally published in 1641.

⁴⁸ Life, pp. 50-53, cited by Gooch, op. cit., p. 116.

⁴⁹ Thomas Goodwin, The Government and Discipline of the Churches of Christ, propos'd familiarly by way of Question and Answer, Works (1696 ed.), p. 35, IV.

⁵⁰ It might be argued whether or not there was as much worship of royalty in Scotland as in England, but Presbyterian respect for crowned heads certainly outshone Independents... with the possible exception of New England.

⁵¹ David Laing (ed.), The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, 1841), p. 63, II.

⁵² A. F. Mitchell et John Struthers (eds.), Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines etc. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), p. 540, Sess. 1145, Dec. 1, 1648. Thomas Goodwin and the other Independent leaders had left the Assembly before this and had no part in the vote.

⁵³ Richard Baxter, Gildas Salvianus: The Reformed Pastor (ed. by John T. Wilkinson, London: The Epworth Press, 1955), p. 61.

⁵⁴ Loc. cit., footnote.

⁵⁵ The Divine Right of Church Government, by Sundry Ministers within the City of London (London: 1646), pp. 260, 261. I have used an edition published in Paisley, 1799. Cf. Rutherford, Preeminence of election, op. cit., p. 53, popular government is "no government, because all are Rulers, and none are governed and ruled;" Gillespie, An Assertion, op. cit., p. 110, "in every Christian Congregation, there are some Rulers, some ruled, some Governors, some governed, some that command, some that obey... But if the whole Congregation have the Rule and Government, who then shall be ruled and governed?" (*italics mine*); et Richard Baxter, A Holy Commonwealth, op. cit., p. 89ff, who criticized democracy because it confuses the ruler with the ruled.

⁵⁶ Vide e.g. John Owen, A Brief Instruction In the Worship of God and Discipline of the Churches of the New Testament. By Way of Question and Answer etc. (1667), p. 502, Works, vol. XV. This later became known as the Independents' Catechism". Owen writes "Q. 29 What is the duty of the church towards their elders, pastors, or teachers? A. To have them in reverence and honour for their office and work's sake; to obey them conscientiously in all things wherein they speak unto them in the name of the Lord." Dr. Nuttall, in his Visible Saints, op. cit., p. 126, calls attention to the fact that many Independent church covenants included sections enjoining the people's obedience to their officers. Presbyterian claims that Congregationalists cared not for their officers and that they made the people supreme over their rulers were ill founded.

⁵⁷ G. P. Gooch remarks, however, that Calvin desired the pastor to preside in all elections "in order that the multitude do not proceed with precipitacy or in tumult", (quoting Institutes, IV. c. 3). Albeit the people are still to have the right of consent and approbation of their ministers. Vide History of English Democratic Ideas, op. cit., p. 6.

⁵⁸ Henry Jacob, An attestation of many Learned, Godly, & famous Divines, Lightes of Religion, and pillars of the Gospell, justifying this doctrine, viz. That the church-government ought to bee always with the peoples free consent. etc. (n.p. 1613), p. 25ff. et passim.

⁵⁹ Vide Drysdale, History of the Presbyterians, op. cit., p. 118; et Gooch, op. cit., p. 43.

⁶⁰ Gillespie, in his Assertion, op. cit., p. 2, postscript, writes that the charge "that Presbyterians are against the peoples election of their officers... is a calumny." This was in answer to an anonymous tract called Presbyteriall Government Examined which Gillespie ascribes to an anabaptist. Rutherford evidently disagreed with his fellow Scot and ascribed the same pamphlet to one of the moderate Independents, presumably one in the Assembly: Vide Due Right, op. cit., p. 21. W. M. Hetherington, in his History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (fourth edition, ed. by Robert Williamson, Edinburgh: James Gemmell, 1878), p. 396, says that George Gillespie's last book entitled, "Miscellaneous Questions", has a whole chapter devoted to the subject "Of the Election of Pastors with the Congregation's Consent." The vehemence with which the Scottish Commissioners championed this cause indicated that there were

many English Puritans who were not nearly so keen on having the people vote for their officers as is generally supposed.

⁶¹ Alexander Henderson, The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh: 1690), p. 7. This was originally published in 1641. Robert Ballie's Journals, op. cit., p. 94, II, tell us that at the General Assembly prior to the Scottish Commissioners' departure for London in order to attend the Westminster Assembly, there was some trouble over patronage and intrusion of ministers without the people's consent (entry of Aug. 14, 1643). The Scots were prepared, therefore, when they arrived in England. On March 21, 1644, the debates over the power of the people in election began; vide John Lightfoot, The Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines: etc. (Works, vol. XIII, ed. by John Rogers Pitman, London: 1824), p. 230. Immediately, George Gillespie insisted that "in no case, in a settled church, a minister may be obtruded upon a congregation, renitente ecclesia." (p. 231, *ibid.*) Samuel Rutherford agreed: "the Scriptures constantly give the choice of the pastor to the people. The act of electing is in the people; and the regulating and correcting of their choice is in the presbytery." (*loc. cit.*) It is worth noting that during the course of the day's discussion, Thomas Goodwin made a motion which embodied George Gillespie's ideas (*loc. cit.*). The Scottish Commissioners were not allowed to make motions in the Assembly and this is one occasion when an Independent moved a Scottish proposal. It was not the only instance. But the Assembly was almost hopelessly divided on the issue with English and Scottish Presbyterians against each other (p. 232, *ibid.*). English Presbyterians had never been willing to allow people the full voice in electing their officers. Vide e.g. the argument between Paget and Hooker in Holland (ca. 1630) given in Raymond Stearns, Congregationalism in the Dutch Netherlands (Chicago: The American Society of Church History, 1946), p. 108. Paget maintained that the call of a minister was by classis only; Hooker said that people must also vote. Another indication of the reluctance on the part of some English Presbyterians to give the right of election to the people, is found in The Divine Right of Church Government by Sundry Ministers of Christ within the City of London (London: 1646). The editor of the Paisley edition of 1799 admits on p. 243 (footnote), that the London Presbyterian ministers did not "fully invest the right of election in the people" and consequently replaced that section with another reference. The London ministers did not allow enough democratic procedure to suit the editor. William M. Campbell, The Triumph of Presbyterianism (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1958), p. 81, notes: Samuel Rutherford favored the people's election rights so courageously that he was criticized for approaching too close to the Independent position. On the other hand, Henderson was not so keen on the people's right to elect their minister as was Rutherford (*ibid.*, p. 130).

⁶² Charles Herle, The Independency on Scriptures of the Independency of Churches: etc. (London: 1643), p. 3. The author is an English Presbyterian and it must not therefore be inferred that all of the synodical brethren south of the border were opposed to the people's election of officers. The Scots found some supporters, but their cause was not unanimously embraced.

⁶³ Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p. 21.

⁶⁴ Vide e.g. James L. Ainslie, The Doctrines of Ministerial Order in the Reformed Churches of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1940), p. 231ff., Chap. X., "Validity" of the minister's call depends on the people's calling him by vote (p. 233); et Divine Right of Church Government (vide footnote number 60, *supra*) pp. 237, 238.

⁶⁵ Albert Peel, The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, 1658 (London: Independent Press, 1939), p. 71, Sect. XI.

⁶⁶ Richard Mather, Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed, In an Answer of the Elders of the severall Churches in New England to two and thirty Questions, sent over to them by divers Ministers in England to declare their judgments therein. etc. (London: 1643), p. 41.

⁶⁷ John Cotton, The True Constitution of A particular visible Church, proved by Scripture. Wherein is briefly Demonstrated by Questions and Answers what Officers, Worship, and Government Christ hath ordained in his Church. (London: 1642), p. 10. Although Independents and Presbyterians were in general agreement about the people's rights in election, they had different emphases regarding election and ordination: Vide Nuttall, Visible Saints, op. cit., p. 88.

⁶⁸ This contemporary statement was against Cartwright's Directory as cited in Eduard Bernstein, Cromwell and Communism, Socialism and Democracy In the Great English Revolution (published originally as Sozialismus und Demokratie in der grossen englischen Revolution as one of Karl Krautsky's volumes of comprehensive history of Socialism, a fourth edition appearing in 1922), English edition tr. by H. J. Stenning (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1930), p. 30.

⁶⁹ John Goodwin, BAEANIETAI or The Triers (or Tormenters) etc. (London: 1657) p. 5.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

⁷¹ Loc. cit.

⁷² Ibid., p. 7.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 8.

⁷⁴ Loc. cit. This was not the first time John had found some inconsistency in the practice of Thomas Goodwin. Vide supra.

⁷⁵ Samuel Rutherford, A Peaceable and Temperate Plea For Pauls Presbyterie In Scotland. etc. (London: 1642), p. 69. This book is a series of twenty propositions debated by Rutherford and nos. 1, 2, 5 all concern the power of the keys. Cf. Due Right of Presbyteries, op. cit., pp. 290-298, for a similar discussion of the ordinances and the keys. Rutherford complained that giving the keys to the people was only a recent innovation and that history showed that the keys had always before been entrusted to the stewards of office (p. 11, Due Right).

⁷⁶ Ainslie, op. cit., p. 66f. We shall endeavor to show eventually, that Thomas Goodwin was more consistent in connecting preaching with the keys than were the Presbyterians.

⁷⁷ Guilielmus Apollonii, A Consideration of Certain Controversies at this time agitated in the Kingdome of England, Concerning the Government of the Church of God. etc. (London: 1645), p. 45.

⁷⁸ Loc. cit. It is noteworthy that Apollonius attempted to vindicate Presbyterians

from eclipsing the priesthood of all believers by denying them the use of the keys. Evidently, some reformed writers felt a certain tension between their practice and their doctrine.

⁷⁹Thomas Hooker, A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline. etc. (London: 1648), "The Preface", unpagged.

⁸⁰William Dell, The Way of True Peace and Unity In the true Church of Christ, In all humility and bowels of love presented to them. (London: 1651), p.187. This is bound with Dell's book, Christ's Spirit and the paging is consecutive for all the works of the author included in the one volume.

⁸¹John Owen, The True Nature of a Gospel Church and Its Government, The Second Part (1789), p.63, XVI, Works (ed. by W.H. Goold, London and Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1861). Richard Baxter once mistakenly observed that Owen had reversed his position regarding the keys and denied them to the people: vide J. M. Lloyd Thomas (ed.), The Autobiography of Richard Baxter, (Everyman's Library, London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1931), p.212. Cf. R. Baxter, Church Concord: etc. (London: 1691), p.25ff., Chap. VII, number 5, the "Power of the Keyes". In this book, Baxter quotes Rutherford that Owen "was at last against all Governing Power in the people, and for the Pastors government only". (ibid., p.26) Because of this, Baxter was encouraged a third time to seek a union with the Independents. Unfortunately, however, he was incorrect about Owen's views, which is evident when the whole passage in question is quoted: "Q.42. Unto whom is the power and administration of this discipline committed by Jesus Christ? A. As to the authority to be exerted in it, in the things wherein the whole church is concerned, unto the elders, as unto trial, judgment, and consent in and unto its exercise, unto the whole brotherhood; as unto love, care, and watchfulness in private and particular cases, to every member of the church"; from John Owen, A Brief Instruction In the Worship of God and Discipline Of the Churches of the New Testament. By Way Question and Answer; With An Explicatin and Confirmation of those Answers. (1667) found in vol. XV, Works, op. cit., p.514. The administration of the keys was always attached to the offices of pastor and elder although the actual power lay in the people. Cf. A Discourse of Spiritual Gifts (1693), p.441, IV, for the connection of the keys with a badge of office. What Baxter misunderstood, was the statement: "This authority, in the discipline of the church they [i.e. the officers] exert and put forth by virtue of thier office, and not either as declaring of the power of the church itself, or acting what is delegated unto them thereby, but as ministerially exercising the authority of Christ committed unto themselves." from A Brief Instruction, supra, later called the "Independent's Catechism", p.515, XV. It must be noted that Owen never wavered from his intention of giving the power of the keys to the people, and the administration of the keys to the officers. Failure to understand this dichotomy, resulted in Baxter's misinterpreting Owen.

⁸²Vide Thomas Goodwin, Of the Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ, Works (1696ed.), p.44ff., IV, Chap. II: Book II, on the use of the keys.

⁸³Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.6.

⁸⁴E. g. Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., pp.290-298.

⁸⁵Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.152.

⁸⁶Ibid., p.44.

⁸⁷Thomas Goodwin, The Government and Discipline of the Churches of Christ, props'd familiarly by way of Question and Answer, bound in vol. IV, Works (1696 ed.), p. 20. Goodwin is very similar to John Owen in connecting the offices of pastor and elder with administration of the keys, even though the actual power lay with the people.

⁸⁸Divergent results in exegesis of certain key scripture passages practically produced the entire Presbyterian-Independent controversy. Thus, any predilections were preponderating in repercussion.

⁸⁹Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p. 175.

⁹⁰Thomas Edwards, Antapologia: Or A Full Answer to the Apologeticall Narration of Mr. Goodwin, et. al. etc. (London: 1646), p. 29; et Baillie, Dissuasive, op. cit. p. 83.

⁹¹Divine Right of Church Government, op. cit., p. 258. Cf. Gillespie, An Assertion, op. cit., p. 118, for a similar statement.

⁹²Daniel Cawdrey, Church-Reformation Promoted: In a Sermon on Matth. 18. Vers. 15, 16, 17. etc. (London: 1657), p. 32. Cf. Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p. 14, for a similar exegetical prejudice.

⁹³Baillie, Dissuasive, op. cit., p. 192.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 110.

⁹⁵Vide Samuel Hudson, The Essence and Unitle of the Church Catholike Visible, And the Prioritie thereof in regard of Particular Churches Discussed (London: 1645), p. 10; Charles Herle, Independency on Scriptures, op. cit., p. 32; Matthew Poole, A Moderate Enquiry into the Warrantableness of the Preaching of Gifted and Un-ordained Persons (London: date cut off in rebinding process of copy in New College Library, University of Edinburgh), p. 139; Gillespie, An Assertion op. cit., p. 120, et Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p. 28, William M. Campbell, op. cit., p. 91, interprets Rutherford's Survey as allowing women to vote in ministerial elections, but this suggestion is highly questionable.

⁹⁶E. g. Alexander F. Mitchell et John Struthers (eds.), Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines etc. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), p. 20, Sess. 341, Dec. 13, 1644.

⁹⁷George Gillespie, Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster. etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846), p. 46, March 28, 1644.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 105.

⁹⁹John Robinson disenfranchised women. Vide A Just and Necessary Apology, Works, pp. 42, 43, III, cited in R. W. Dale, History of English Congregationalism (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), p. 209. Samuel Rutherford also quoted Robinson's Justification of Separation, pp. 124, 124, 126, 127, to prove that women should

not be allowed to vote. Vide Due Right, op. cit., p.28. Robinson had said that "the Keyes are given to all, though not to be used by all and every one alike, which were grosse confusion." His position might very well be the source from which both Thomas Goodwin and John Owen drew

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.48. In New England, the practice was the same. Richard Mather's Church-Government and Church Covenant Discussed, etc. (London: 1643), pp.3,4, questions numbers 13-17 concern the power of the people in ecclesiastical affairs, including the subject of women voting and on p.60, the elders say: "The rule is expresse and plaine that women ought not to speake in the Church, but to be in silence, I. Cor.14.34. I Tim.2.11.12. And therefore they ought not to vote in Church matters; besides voting imports some kind of government, and authority and power: now it is not government and authority, but subjection and obedience which belongs unto women, by the rule, and so is the practice of women amongst us." This is the shortest answer given in this tract by the elders of New England to any question. About the place of women in the churches, there was no time for debate or discussion.

¹⁰¹ John Calvin provided for the people to consent in excommunication although it must be done "in such a way that the multitude have not the chief power in its determination", Institutes, IV, c.12, as cited in Gooch, op. cit., p.6. Following him, Thomas Cartwright wrote, that, "in all the greater affaires of the Church, as in Excommunicating of any, and in choosing and deposing of Church Ministers, nothing may be concluded without the knowledge and consent of the Church;" vide A Directory of Church-government Drawn up and Used by the Elizabethan Presbyterians (reprint of edition of 1644, London: James Nisbet & Co., 1872), unpagged. But Cartwright clearly meant that the eldership was to be the principal mover in censures, not the people: "Of the Censures... Greater and publique offenses are to be handled by the Consistory." ibid., unpagged. An important part of Presbyterianism was the handling of disciplinary cases involving excommunication by the Presbytery. Vide Apollonius of Middleburg, A Consideration of Certain Controversies etc. (London: 1645), p.118: "we hold that a Classis or Synod of Pastors hath power to admonish and rebuke authoritatively and with power Ecclesiasticall."

¹⁰² Richard Baxter, Gildas Salvianus: The Reformed Pastor (ed. by John T. Wilkinson, London: The Epworth Press, 1955), p.178. Cf. Baxter's Christian Concord: or the Agreement of the Association Pastors and Churches of Worcestershire. With Richard Baxter's Explication and Defense of it, and his Exhortation to Unity, proposition XV. This virtual denial of one of the fundamental tenets of Independency probably accounts for the lack of support for Baxter's Worcestershire ministerial association on the part of the local Congregationalists.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.179.

¹⁰⁴ Gillespie, An Assertion, op. cit., p.121. Gillespie's essential moderacy is shown by his willingness to agree with a Separatist tract which gives the right of free consent to the people (vide p.118) in disciplinary matters. Cf. p.177, ibid., for Paget's view of the people's consent in discipline; et Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p.21, for the same subject.

¹⁰⁵ Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p.23.

¹⁰⁶ John Cotton, True Constitutuon, op. cit., p.10.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p.10. Cf. Richard Mather, Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed, op. cit., pp.3, 4, questions number 13-17 deal with the people's power in ecclesiastical affairs; Albert Peel, Savoy Declaration, op. cit., p.71, Sect. XVIII, local churches have the power of censures; et Ames, Marrow of Sacred Divinity, op. cit., pp.169-170.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.130. Cf. Baxter's Reformed Pastor, op. cit., p.88: et Ames, Marrow, op. cit., p.166: Thomas Goodwin's main argument against the Presbyterian doctrine of excommunication was that it infringed on the rights of the people to see and be edified. He cited I Tim. 5:20, "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that all may fear," which cannot be done in representative synods where all the rank and file saints are excluded [Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.129]. Discipline was a sermon to be preached where all could hear it. The Papists' Latin mumbo jumbo, the Anglican's lifeless prayer book, and the Presbyterian's secretive discipline were all anathema to a Puritan who wanted the people to hear the Word preached openly to the hearts of men. It was this primary concern which prompted Independents to oppose the Presbyterian system of excommunication. William M. Campbell, op. cit., pp.62, 63, is in error when he attributes this opposition to purely political motives. Independents did not see their opponent's concept in the Scripture and secondly, they wished to defend the people's rights.

¹⁰⁹Vide his Church Concord: etc. (London: 1691), p.23.

¹¹⁰ Richard Baxter in his Life (ed. by Sylvester), part I, p.33.

¹¹¹ John Lightfoot, The Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines: etc. (Works, vol. XIII, ed. by John Rogers Pitman, London: 1824), p.123, Jan. 26th, 1644.

¹¹²Ibid., p.121, Jan. 25th, 1644.

¹¹³ George Gillespie, Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines etc. (ed. by David Meek, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846), p.44.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p.52.

¹¹⁵Vide Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Visible Saints, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p.89. Men like William Barlett spoke out against Episcopal ordination and John Owen renounced his. After the Restoration, John Howe refused reordination at the hands of the bishops. Cf. Nuttall's article, "The Early Congregational Conception of the Ministry and the Place of Women Within It", Congregational Quarterly, XXVI;2 (April, 1948), p.155.

¹¹⁶Journal, op. cit., p.24.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p.122. Later, that same year, in the Committee for the Directory of Ordination, Philip Nye defended unordained men as chaplains to the army and navy on the grounds that such charges were not churches. However, there is some evidence that Cromwell once thought of incorporating army companies into organized churches. Cf. Robert S. Paul, The Lord Protector (London: Lutterworth Press, 1955), p.67.

118 Lightfoot, Journal, op. cit., p.220. W.W. Carruthers, The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly (Philadelphia: published jointly by the Presbyterian Historical Societies of America and England, 1943), p.138, incorrectly says that this speech of Marshall's was made on Feb. 15th, 1643/4 instead of March 18th, 1643/4.

119 Carruthers, op. cit., p.184, points out that Palmer was one of the most important figures in the debates over ordination and that after his death, the Assembly sought his papers on the subject.

120 Lightfoot, Journal, op. cit., p.222. Apollos is also discussed at some length by Matthew Poole, A Moderate Enquiry into the Warrantableness of the Preaching of Gifted and Unordained Persons (London: n.d.), pp. 61-63, 116ff.

121 Alexander F. Mitchell et John Struthers (eds.), Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines etc. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), p.178, sess.573. Cf. Carruthers, op. cit., p.135.

122 The Saints Hiding-Place In the time of Gods Anger. etc. (London: 1647), p.10.

123 Vide his The Arraignment of Licentious Liberty. . . . etc. (London: 1647), p.17.

124 In his The Authours, Nature, and Danger of Haeresie. etc. (London: 1647), p.10f.

125 Poole, op. cit., p.39. Cf. Ibid., p.116ff. for a lengthy list of arguments for and against the preachings of unordained persons. The author gives fifteen reasons to support his view, and can only think of four which support his opponents (all of which he answers in debate). It is significant that one of his main proofs against unordained preachers is the Old Testament precedent (i.e. Uzzah, Saul, and Uzziah), loc. cit., reason number 7. Cf. our appendix "F" on Puritan preachers and the Old Testament, also, supra, on the Old Testament's place in the controversy. Men like Poole, Vines, and Palmer were so far to the right on their concept of the ministry that they are almost out of the main stream of reformed teaching. Cf. James L. Ainslie's epochal book, The Doctrines of Ministerial Order In the Reformed Churches of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1940), p.139ff., chap. VI, "Admission to the Ministerial Order of the Reformed Church"; et p.155ff., chap. VII, "The Solemn Setting Apart, Or the Ordination".

126 Journal, op. cit., p.262.

127 Loc. cit. Close voting and narrow majorities characterized the ordination propositions. One carried by only four votes, another by five, and one was voted three times before finally being settled. Vide Lightfoot, Journal, p.267, May 26th, 1644.

128 Vide Gillespie's Notes, op. cit., p.60. Later, the same year, Robert Baillie reported the same thing. Cf. David Laing (ed.), The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, 1841), p.230, II, letter to Dickson, dated Sept. 16th, 1644. Lightfoot, however, in his Journal, op. cit., p.121, 1644, entry dated Jan. 25th, 1644, reported that Marshall had argued against Philip Nye in a debate on ordination. Either Marshall had not yet been won over to the full Independent position, or else he was publicly reprimanding Nye for having given away the strength

of the Congregational position by a few ill-chosen remarks. It is perhaps the more striking if, as some say, Marshall was Nye's father-in-law.

¹²⁹Vide Gillespie's Notes, op. cit., p. 48. The whole debate pro and con appears in Thomas Goodwin's The Grand Debate Concerning Presbitery and Independency By the Assembly of Divines convened at Westminster etc. (n.p.: 1652), p. 190ff., "Reasons of the Dissenting Brethren Concerning The Power That is in Congregations Having in them a Sufficient Presbytery for Ordination", (originally published in 1648). The Minutes, op. cit., p. 514, sess. 1054, tell us that the final answer of the Assembly to these Reasons was given in on April 19, 1648. W. M. Hetherington, History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (ed. by Robert Williamson, Edinburgh: James Gemmell, 1878, fourth edition), p. 206, discusses this debate. For a viewpoint outside the sederunt, cf. Thomas Hooker's A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline etc. (London: 1648), p. 38ff., chap. II, "Wherein the nature of Ordination is discussed", Part II; et Richard Baxter's Church Concord: etc. (London: 1691), p. 23ff., chap. VI, number 4, "Power of Ordination... in a particular Church."

¹³⁰Cited from the anonymous tract, Christ on his Throne, or, Christs Church-government briefly laid downe; etc (n.p. 1640), p. 69. Such "consociation" among churches was fully in accord with Thomas Cartwright's A Directory of Church-government Drawn up and Used by the Elizabethan Presbyterians (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1872, reprinted in fac-simile from the edition of 1644), unpagged: "let the Minister be examined not onely by one Eldership, but also by some greater meeting and assembly."

¹³¹ Poole, op. cit., p. 136.

¹³²Hooker, op. cit., "The Preface", unpagged. Once again, the Independent view paralleled Cartwright's. Cf. his Directory, op. cit., unpagged: "The party to be called must first be elected, then he is to be ordained to that charge whereunto he is chosen, by the prayers of that Church whereunto he is to be admitted." In the Assembly, there was a division and a dilemma among the Presbyterians. Stephen Marshall, along with the Independents, took the view that election was necessary to ordination. Vide Gillespie, Notes, op. cit., p. 44, March 19, 1644. And if election precedes ordination, then there must be a charge for every man before he can be ordained to it as a result of such an election. This was the view of Thomas Goodwin. Vide Lightfoot's Journal, op. cit., p. 228, March 20, 1644. But there were several Presbyterians, also, who wanted a designated charge as a prerequisite for ordination and this posed their difficulty. Calamy saw the trap clearly, that if a man had to have a previous charge (i.e. elected to it prior to ordination) then his call would be limited to that place, thereby destroying one of the basic ideas of Presbyterianism, that a Presbyter is an officer to all the churches in the world and not only to the one from which he comes. Ibid., p. 227. Cf. Poole, op. cit., p. 116, for another mention of the election prior to ordination matter. Presbyterians, who insisted on a specific charge before ordination found that they were well on the road to an outright Congregational concept of the ministry.

¹³³ In his A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London: 1646), p. 186,

¹³⁴ The Due Right of Presbyteries etc. (London: 1644), p. 186.

¹³⁵In the forefront was Thomas Goodwin, Lightfoot's Journal, op. cit., p.103, Jan. 4, 1644, records one of Goodwin's expositions of Titus 1:5 in the debate over the question of the apostles having the power to ordain apart from the church's election. This exegesis is the more remarkable, because Goodwin does not quote any outside authorities to support his position. Vide supra on the use of external authority. Independents opposed anything that resembled apostolic succession, but Presbyterians felt that Presbyters were "new apostles" instituted by God to ordain by the laying on of hands. Cf. Hetherington, op. cit., p.167, et Rutherford, op. cit., p.205f. That the Independents were successful in their campaign is also evident by the fact that even George Gillespie joined with Goodwin, Nye et al. in opposition to one proposition which (it is presumed) did not give the people any rights at all in ordination. Vide Lightfoot's Journal, op. cit., p.196, Jan. 8, 1644. A few days later, Seaman suggested that the Independents be made into a committee to report on ordination. Ibid., p.114, Jan. 17th, 1644. The committee report was made by Philip Nye, on Jan. 10, 1644 loc. cit. but the text sounds as though Goodwin wrote it. Lightfoot, op. cit., p.115, describes the report as "to obscure", and "ambiguous". The peremptory rejection of the Independent proposals on ordination was indicative of Westminster Presbyterian prejudice, which eventually prompted the release of A Copy of Remonstrance Lately Delivered in to the Assembly By Thomas Goodwin etc. (London: 1645). Cf. p.4. Nevertheless, this report evidently found some interested ears. Even George Gillespie, An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh: 1641), p.133, was virtually the same as the Independent report three years later. Gillespie admitted that a presbytery only had the right to set a "Seale and Testimony" on the candidate by the laying on of hands...not a power to convey as such (that comes from God). The Westminster Independents made such a success of their campaign, in fact, that on April 4, 1644, Palmer said he was now willing to accommodate them and would have, except that Lightfoot and a few others opposed it. Vide the latter's Journal, op. cit., p.241.

¹³⁶On Nov. 20, 1643, a petition was received in the Assembly from the London ministers, requesting among other things, the right of ordination. Lightfoot, ibid., p.56. In the debate over this the Congregationalists opposed it because they wanted no precedent established. The argument briefly was this: whether they were going to ordain because they were a presbytery, or whether they were a Presbytery, because they were going to ordain. Either way, Independency was doomed. Ibid., p.124, Jan. 27, 1644. Charles Herle suggested that the ministers be given the right to ordain jure fraternitatis (not jure divino). Selden spoke of the "conveniency" of the present time to have the power delegated as proposed. Ibid., p.125. But the Dissenting Brethren felt that to grant such a right would settle the whole point of Presbyterian government. Gillespie moved that freedom of debate be agreed to in all future discussion. Ibid., p.126. Vines proposed that the Independents in a committee give their suggestions as to how the ministry might be supplied...if the London ministers were denied. Loc. cit., Jan. 27th, 1644. And throughout these debates over the London ministers' request, Thomas Goodwin must have departed himself very well, because when it came time to frame the proposition, Seaman insisted that Goodwin, "should state it". Ibid., p.127, Jan. 29, 1644. He evidently was recognized for having the clearest head in such affairs. Vide ibid., p.128, et supra, for the interesting discussion of "divine right" which grew out of this argument in the sederunt.

CHAPTER XI

THE CONCEPT OF THE CHURCH

SECTION A: NATIONAL CHURCHES AND THE CONTROVERSY

The Puritan revolution of 1640-1660 was an attempt to define the Church in terms which would do no violence to any revealed truth in Scripture. Failure to agree on such a definition, amounted to a failure of Puritanism. And in this regard, nothing contributed more to the miscarriage of the Puritan experiment than the Presbyterian-Independent controversy; for their respective ideas of what constituted the Church were not only mutually exclusive, but the friction of arguments often produced more heat than the insulation of love was capable of dissipating.

Excess of Stewart Kings and Laudian prelates may have alienated the people from both, but only a few extremists talked of a separation of church and state. The ideal of a National Church was too deeply ingrained in the thinking of the country to expect any great change in that quarter, even after the Long Parliament had ended prelacy, imprisoned Laud, and recruited a formidable army in the field against Charles I. Presbyterians always expected (at the very least) to replace one national establishment with another. To do anything else was to endanger the peace of the realm:

A National Church is where all the visible, publike, religious assemblies of a Nation, being parts of the Church Catholike, living under one politick, civill Government, are by the profession of the same faith, and communion in the same worship and Government, united into one body Ecclesiastick, or Ecclesiasticall Republicke.¹

Such were the hopes of the Presbyterian party. None were to be excluded from the church who were citizens of the state and who were outwardly obedient to the church's communion. The reasons were two-fold: (1) the state must not be secularized at the expense of Christianity, and (2) all the people must be under the hearing of the gospel in order to receive salvation and this is only possible where none are capriciously excluded from the public worship of God (excepting, of course, scandalous sinners whose presence brings reproach upon the name of Christ and His Church).

Many Independents were adamantly opposed to these claims. They said that it was a

vain...thing...to expect a right Gospel-Reformation in matters of visible worship throughout the Kingdome, so long as they remaine under a false, visible, National Church state, and order of worship.²

They asked, "What Nationall worship hath Christ instituted? doth our Birth in the Nation make us members of the Church?"³ These questions were so "palpably plaine" that they are not worthy to be answered.⁴

Few, if any, of the most eminent Puritans launched such a devastating attack on National Churches as did Thomas Goodwin. Christ "doth not take nations, but Select out of Nations, out of Cities and Tribes, Saints here and there; and formeth them up into Congregations."⁵ God has now altered His method of dealing with Saints. Under the Old Testament, a whole nation was used to perfect God's plan, but now God takes only a few saints out of all nations to do the same work.⁶

We live in a new dispensation and those who would build national churches are open to several thunderous criticisms. The first is that national churches are modeled after the political government when they ought to be modeled after spiritual exemplars. "God doth not shape a Spiritual Government, unto the political" because

"Political Government goes by the bounds of the Soil". To make all who live on a particular piece of soil to be members of the Church presupposes an ecclesiastical government that is of the earth earthy.⁷ Christ's kingdom is not of this world and its government must not be conformed to the world, but transformed by the Spirit.

Furthermore, national churches profane the Lord's table by allowing both Christian and non-Christian to sit and partake.⁸ The seals of the covenant must be guarded from unbelievers lest Christ be mocked and the Church compromised. Since only saints are fit to sit at the Lord's table, and since many in a kingdom are not saints, it follows that a great disservice is done by national churches when they celebrate communion unworthily.

Baptism, too, is profaned by national churches. Only the children of godly parents are eligible for Christian baptism; children of ungodly parents should not receive the sacrament.⁹ National churches, he implies, use the rite of infant baptism for selfish and unspiritual ends... i.e. for political expediency and for national unity. Goodwin would guard both sacraments against carnal infringements which tend to utilize them as tools of the state.

And if these reasons are not sufficient, Goodwin had yet another broadside by which he hoped to sink the ship of national establishments. His final argument is that national churches are based on a false notion of peace and unity which is both carnal and impotent:

they pretend that their design is to procure peace in the Churches, as if the only way to peace (which they take for granted too) were to impose the more common and generally prevailing Opinions concerning Faith, and Worship, upon others who do dissent;¹⁰

The Presbyterians would buy uniformity at the exorbitant price of mixing carnality and spirituality. They would bring the world into the Church in order to have ecclesiastical peace:

And now what then is the Quarrel between their Dissenting Brethren, and them? Their Dissenting Brethren say, We love

you, and are very desirous to joyn with you in the Ordinances of God, but you joyn herein with the World, which we cannot do. Upon this they cry out upon us as Schismatics; what a terrible thing is this? They make up a Party in the World of those who have only a Form of Godliness, contrary to the Rule which enjoyns us to turn away from such, 2 Tim. 3. 5. And contrary to the Rule of loving all the Saints, they exclude a great many who cannot unite in the Laxness of their Discipline, and act oppositely to the Law of bearing the burdens of such, and act thus in matters too, wherein they cannot convince them that they are wrong.¹¹

Separation, therefore, was on the basis of love. If the Presbyterians insisted on a National establishment with uniformity of worship, then they were guilty of lack of love in not granting tolerance to brethren who scrupled mixing with the world to the detriment of holiness and purity of churches and worship. By such means, they might achieve a measure of outward peace, but the price was too great:

it is no wonder if the World be at peace with them. For if they will own them, and their Children, and admit them to their Sacraments, they have in Religious respects what they did desire, and for other things of Religion they are not much inquisitive; for so they have but a Religion, they are not apt to be scrupulous in things of that nature, and so they are at peace. But what is the peace which they have with these? It is but a dull peace, such as Rome hath amongst her Children, who go by an Implicit Faith, insomuch as there is little Religion, and little Enquiry about it among them. But a man whose mind God hath enlightened, and who knows Jesus Christ to the purpose of Salvation, is an inquisitive creature, and must be satisfied, and it is his burden if he is not, and this burden they ought to bear. But they gratifie the World rather to make up an Interest with them, that so they may have peace.¹²

The Church militant must prevail, but not at the cost of compromise, surrender, or carnal methods of warfare. The world and the Church are two separate entities and National churches confuse them so that the latter is weakened and impotent to battle with the former as the Scriptures indicate is necessary.

Even if all the foregoing were not true, there are still not enough saints in England to make a national church. And it is inconceivable that unbelievers should dominate the Lord's house:

Now the condition of those that are Saints (which are only fit to be Members of Churches) is to be scattered up and down, and to be few; for they are Redeemed out of Nations: There are few Cities in England will afford more Saints, than will make one Church, but London. So as the reason, why, that under the

Gospel, there is not this National Government for Churches, is because a Nation comes not up to Christ's terms, and if it should, there are other respects that make the alteration; for it was fit that the Body of the Saints, the People, should have interest of presence, and of a virtual concurrence, and of edification; yea of suffrage in the government. It was for the Honour of the Saints...that it should be so...¹³

Since there were few real saints in the country, their rights must be protected.

And in national churches, the genuine saints are either deprived of their prerogatives through diffusion in ever widening representative assemblies (i.e. in Presbyterianism) or else they are outvoted by those whose second birth is in question. The honor of "the people"¹⁴ must always be scrupulously guarded against the intrusions of non-believers.

There is one curious omission in Thomas Goodwin's prolonged attack on national churches. He nowhere mentions the fact that national churches and persecution have often gone hand in hand. Whatever Goodwin's motives in this oversight, Roger Williams had no such scruples. National Churches can only produce "Hypocritets" under fear of persecution "and sooner or later, the kindling of the devouring flames of Civill Warres, as all Ages testify."¹⁷

Another writer who connects persecution with National Churches is Louis Du Moulin: national establishments, are

always grounded upon humane principles, cruel, and barbarous, as to constrain, to persecute, and even to burn those who in matter of Religion do not embrace that of the Ecclesiastical State, or of the Magistrate that establishes it, and do not conform to all the practices that he appoints and commands.¹⁸

The debate over national churches presented certain problems of exegesis which proved most difficult to resolve. Not the least of these was the relation between the Old and New Testaments. Independents claimed that the pages of the New Testament were silent about national establishments: "we cannot finde in all the New Testament any the least footsteps of such a Church."¹⁹

Thomas Goodwin said that the burden of proof was on anyone who would attempt to prove national churches in the New Testament. "This remaineth first to be proved,"

he said, "that Jesus Christ hath made National Churches under the New Testament, to be politick Bodies."²⁰ Sardonicallly, he adds, that "it were strange that that Form [i. e. National Church structure] should be erected by Christ, that the Apostles lived not to see."²¹ Goodwin's most telling argument against National Churches, therefore, was the fact of their absence from the pages of the New Testament.

If in his Providence he foresaw that Nations, being turned to him, should have an answerable Government as the Jews had, he would have given Rules answerable.²²

Thus, the Presbyterians were placed squarely on the prongs of a dilemma. If Jesus did not want National Churches (and He admittedly did not mention them in the New Testament), then Presbyterians were adding to the Word of God by establishing them. But if, on the other hand, Jesus intended that National Churches should eventually come into being, then Presbyterians slander His character in tacitly admitting that He did not foresee events and did not remember to give adequate instructions for their development. The choice before the Presbyterians was either to add to the New Testament Revelation or to oppugn Christ. Either would have been repulsive to a Puritan.

The relentless logic of Independents, such as Goodwin, forced the Presbyterians to flee into the pages of the Old Testament to prove their polity, for it was the only part of the Scripture now open to them. They set out to prove their polity by an analogy with the Jewish nation. Their retreat was soon cut off by Congregational forces lying in wait, ready to harass the enemy in his flight:

National Churches are a mixed multitude, consisting for the greatest part of prophane persons, being as a confused lump, whereof there are nine parts of leaven to one of pure flowre, so as the whole is miserably soured, and the flowre made altogether unsavoury: But that of the Jewes, in its naturall and externall constitutuon, was all holy, an holy Nation, a Royall Priesthood, a peculiar People, all th congregation holy, every one of them: So as in no one particular, doe your Nationall Churches hold parallell with that of the Jewes, no not in the last resemblance. ²³

Some of the Independents went so far as to deny any national churches in either the Old or the New Testaments.²⁴ Most Independents admitted, however, that there was a national church in the Old Testament Jewish economy.²⁵

In presenting an exposition of Matthew 18, Thomas Goodwin distinguishes between "the legal way of a National Church, or of a Synedrim, or of going up to one Temple" and the way of "Synagogues" or choosing "churches out of Nations". Christ took the latter and "did not hold to one National Church of the Jews; . . . we read of Churches in Judea itself, and not Church, Gal. 1. 22."²⁶ Furthermore, the

Instance of the Jewish Church, will rather serve for the proof of an universal Church, than for any evidence, that there should be as many churches, as there be Nations. When the Jews did turn Christians, they were the same Nation; yet the Apostles do nowhere Write to them as a National Church: They Write not to the Church of Judea, but to the Churches.²⁷

A dispensational attitude accounts for the rejection of the argument that national churches are justified by the example of the Old Testament Jewish Church. Roger Williams's dictum that "such as hold a National Church of God must needs disclaim Christ and follow Moses,"²⁸ was indicative of the general position. National establishments dishonored Christ, enthroned an outmoded economy, and seriously endangered the spiritual opportunities of the true people of God.

Under the force of Independent apologetic, some Presbyterians gave way. Samuel Rutherford, who drew most of his Presbyterian proof texts from the Old Testament and was therefore particularly susceptible to the impact of dispensational exegesis, finally had to admit that "a National Church is taken in another sense now" than in the days of the Jewish economy.²⁹ Lengthy and capricious explanations now had to be relied upon to deliver Presbyterian defenders from the predicament in which their Old Testament analogical applications of Scripture had placed them. Even Apollonius succumbed: "We deny indeed that there can be any such Typicall. . . Church now under the New Testament, as the Jewish Church was."³⁰ By withdrawing so far from the original Presbyterian position, the Middleburgh minister was cutting off the first argument of ninety percent of Presbyterian writers.³¹

There were only two ways of escaping the inexorable pursuit of Independent apologetic; either to resort to the Old Testament and the analogy of the Jewish Church, or else to pose some sort of developmental theory of church polity. It was the latter which William Prinne espoused. National Churches are not in the New Testament, it is true, but that does not mean they could not be built: "Christ with his Apostles certainly knew et predicted there should be National conversions, Churches after their dayes."³² Prinne ridiculed Independents, because they did not think that the Church should ever grow up to maturity:

Every man in his Infancy is borne destitute of Religion, of the use of speech, reason, understanding, faith, legs, etc. Ergo, he ought to continue so when he is growne a man. Yet this is the maine Argument of some Independents.³³

The remarkable feature of Prinne's position is that he freely admitted that the Church in the Apostle's time "was not National" because it was still in "her primitive infant condition."³⁴ To Thomas Goodwin and other Independents, this amounted to a repudiation of the revealed will of God in Scripture and the substitution of a dangerous rule of hermeneutics which would allow almost any kind of development. A literal interpretation of the New Testament polity was far safer, and more apt to reveal God's intention.

SECTION B: NATIONAL CHURCHES AND CONGREGATIONALIST INCONSISTENCY

Allegations that a "gathered church" concept of polity is necessarily inconsistent with National Churches were denied by the examples set by many of the seventeenth century leaders of Independency.

In spite of the opinions already expressed on both sides of the controversy over national churches, Independent doctrine soon surrendered to the attraction of a National Church. Douglas Nobbs has pointed out that Philip Nye "was the representative of a school of thought which recognized that Independency was not inconsistent

with a national church and a godly magistrate.³⁵ Nye is described as an original thinker on ecclesiastico-political problems³⁶ but radically different from Milton.³⁷ His position is that a national church is primarily designed for preaching and should be cared for by the king.³⁸ But there is a second kind of church which is called a Gospel church and is designed for believers.³⁹ The two are not the same but have different functions. It is lawful to attend both.⁴⁰ "The state church was the organization of the nation in relation to God, and was God's gift to man in his natural condition, though not Christ's legacy to man in a state of grace."⁴¹

Philip Nye was not the only Congregationalist to puzzle over these questions.

They were also mooted by Thomas Goodwin, who finally had to modify his thinking in order to distinguish between a national church where all the citizens were ipso facto members of the Body of Christ and a "gathered church" sponsored by the government. Under Cromwell, it was expedient to have such explanations ready to hand.

In the 1630's, several of the Independent leaders left England and fled to Holland to escape the Laudian prelates. While there, they displayed very little antipathy to accepting certain privileges from the national government. They were allowed the use of church bells to call the people to worship, which was a privilege enjoyed only by the National Church.⁴² Several English churches in Holland were given houses for the use of the ministers.⁴³ The two co-pastors at Arnheim, Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye, were given the use of one of the local churches and allowed a public allowance.⁴⁴ Goodwin was never averse to taking public money from the government for his ministry, even though he deprecated compulsory tithing.⁴⁵ Later, in the late 1650's, he even pulled political strings in order to secure a stipend from sequestered estates in Ireland, so that he could retire from teaching at Oxford and write books.

An interesting event showing the Independent attitude to public support was the sending of a letter in August, 1655, to various Presbyterian and Independent ministers by Henry Scobell, Clerk of the Council of State under Cromwell. The purpose of

this letter was to determine if the ministers required any augmentation of their incomes. No questions seem to have been raised by any of the Independents on the list concerning the receiving of government funds. William Bridge reported that he was receiving £100 a year from the State in his position at Great Yarmouth.⁴⁶ By the late 1650's, many Presbyterians in Parliament were even willing to accept the Moderate Independents and some Baptists into a National Church scheme because there seemed to be so little reluctance on their part to abhor state support for religion.⁴⁷

But the Independent leaders did not really change their views over a period of years. As early as 1643, Adam Steuart accused them of teaching one thing and practising another. "Here in England... some of you have some Benefices," he charged.⁴⁸ If this were true in 1643, it was more true in a few more years when almost every Independent leader of note was accepting positions in Cromwell's Establishment. Thomas Goodwin became President of Magdalen, Oxford; John Owen, Dean of Christ Church and Vice-Chancellor of Oxford; Philip Nye, rector of St. Bartholomew's in London; Joseph Caryl, rector of St. Mary Magdalen; William Greenhill, incumbent of Stepney; William Bridge, lecturer at Yarmouth; and John Howe, parish minister at Torrington, afterwards chaplain to Cromwell.⁴⁹

The conclusion from all this is not commendatory to the high spiritual motives which prompted the Independent attacks against Presbyterian notions of a national church. In many respects, the latter were less reprehensible. At least they did not expect those who were unbelievers to support the gathered churches of believers. They gave the people something for their money but Independents who accepted public money for Congregational churches can hardly be excused under any kind of apology.

SECTION C: BAPTISM IN THE PRESBYTERIAN-INDEPENDENT CONTROVERSY

The seventeenth century was not only a century of controversy over church

membership, but it was also a peculiarly significant period of theological conflict over baptism. The membership controversy naturally brought to the fore the question of infant baptism. Independents found that they needed a new concept of infant baptism if they were not going to accept the Presbyterian doctrine of the church multitudinous, national, and mixed. The Westminster Confession of Faith had not only said that marriage was "ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed",⁵⁰ but it also plainly stated that "the visible Church, . . . consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children."⁵¹ But Presbyterians were not the only ones who wanted to include infants in the church.⁵² In the Westminster Assembly several Presbyterians as well as the Independents were very reluctant to admit infants as members of the visible church.⁵³

The whole question of infant membership was brought more to the fore when the debates on baptism began on July 11th, 1644.⁵⁴ Coincident with the beginning of this debate in the Assembly, Thomas Goodwin seems to have undertaken a public lecture against the anabaptists,⁵⁵ although Independents were already being accused of having surrendered to the hated "anabaptists".

Furthermore, in the Assembly, differences developed between the Scots and English Presbyterians over the position of the font in baptism. The former wanted it placed close to the pulpit and the latter at the door or wherever the people could best see it.⁵⁶ Also, the question now arose of a confession of faith by the parents before the child should be baptized. The Scots and Independents generally favored such a confession, but there was much debate.⁵⁷

On September 30th, 1644, Thomas Goodwin raised much confusion in the Assembly when the question of circumcision in relation to baptism was broached. From the debate, it would appear that he felt a certain tension between infant baptism as held by Independents and the full Presbyterian position.⁵⁸

Some of the Independents showed in the debates that they were close to the ana-

baptist view of baptism.⁵⁹ Philip Nye was further left than Thomas Goodwin and practically championed believer's baptism: "We have no instances in Scripture, except of adults baptised, and, after those examples, adults ought to profess when they come to be baptised."⁶⁰ It is evident too, that the Independents in the Assembly, were making headway because Seaman seemed to agree with Nye: "This may ensnare us, that there shall be no bar to keep back any man's child, but whosoever will, must have his child baptised."⁶¹ The day following, Gibson agreed that a confession of faith by the parents should be required before baptism was administered to any children: "Neither the jailor nor any of his family were baptised till he had made a confession of his faith."⁶² The vote on this confession was close, but was carried in the affirmative. 28-16.⁶³

The fact that several of the Independent leaders in the Assembly had spoken of infant baptism in terms which sounded "anabaptistical" probably accounts for the fact that not one Independent was appointed to the committee to deal with the Baptist, Tombes, and his heresy of anti-pedobaptism.⁶⁴

This theory is supported by a letter from Robert Baillie to his cousin, William Spang, dated January 20th, 1646 (?), in which the Scot relates how Thomas Goodwin, in the sub-committee on Accommodation, had

declared publickly, that he cannot refuse to be members, nor censure when members, any for Anabaptisme, Luteranisme, or any errors, which are not fundamentall, and maintaine against knowledge; according to their principle in the Apologetick.⁶⁵

Such extreme tolerance could only alienate Presbyterians who felt that anabaptists were among the very worst heretics.

Goodwin did not endear himself to the Westminster Assembly Presbyterians in the dispute over baptism.⁶⁶ He was not appointed to the committee "to consider what children are to be baptized."⁶⁶ Several of his fellow Independents in the Assembly were appointed, such as Jeremiah Burroughs, Woodcocke, and Carrill, but the name of Thomas Goodwin is strangely missing. The implication is that Goodwin's series of

lectures against the baptists as well as his outspoken views in the Assembly (which Baillie claimed favored the anti-pedobaptists instead of refuting them), had caused the Presbyterians to mistrust his sympathies regarding anabaptism in general.

The principal issue dividing the Presbyterians from the Independents over the matter of baptism, was that Independents generally refused to baptize any infants, excepting the children of their own members.⁶⁷ Presbyterians, on the other hand, would have baptized all infants regardless of the church status of the parents.⁶⁸

Perhaps, in no other way did Thomas Goodwin depart more afield from his Independent brethren than in the matter of baptism. As we have already seen, most Congregationalists refused to baptize any infants excepting those whose parents were members of their particular church. Such a procedure was based on the assumption that the ordinance or sacrament of baptism had been given to the local church to "guard" from indiscretion in its administration. The main departure of Goodwin from his brethren was in his assertion that baptism was to be distinguished from the Lord's Supper by the fact that the former was given to the universal church whereas the latter was entrusted to particular churches.⁶⁹ "The apparent difference that is between Baptism and the Lord's Supper in their several intentions, doth shew that the one is properly the Ordinance of a particular Church and the other of the Universal."⁷⁰ He made baptism a personal matter of an individual's relationship with Christ, but the Lord's Supper, he insisted, was a public communal act. The reason which prompted Goodwin to take this view of baptism was based on Acts 8.

there may be some Acts of Ministry, which are properly belonging to the Church Universal, as Universal, and such Acts we judge preaching, and Baptizing to be; and therefore we read, that Baptism was done both out of a Church Relation, and without the presence of a Church, as the Baptizing of the Eunuch by Philip. But so... the Lord's Supper is not; Baptism we rather take to be an Ordinance of the Church Universal.⁷¹

SECTION D: THE PROBLEM OF MEMBERSHIP IN PARTICULAR CHURCHES

Basic to all thinking about the Church was the matter of membership and on the definition of this word hinged the fundamental forces working either for a Presbyterian National Church or an Independent gathered church.

Inherent within the Puritan mind was an exalted idea of sincerity of religion and a corresponding disapprobation of hypocrisy.⁷² A Puritan believed that a man's faith should manifest itself in visible signs.

Albeit that these Good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment, yet are they [not withstanding their imperfections in the sight of God] pleasing and acceptable unto Him, in [and for] Christ, and do spring necessarily out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be evidently known, as a tree discerned by its fruit [s].⁷³

Independents, more than Presbyterians, applied this belief to their concept of the Church. Both parties agreed that membership of the invisible church was confined to those truly regenerate, and both agreed (generally speaking) that membership of particular visible churches should be confined to those who were ipso facto members of the church catholic. But the difference between Presbyterians and Independents was not so much in theory as in practice. The latter "assumed that a subjective experience [i.e. of salvation] can be detected by objective tests."⁷⁴

Whereas Presbyterians were content to admit all who professed Christ and to require very little evidence of true faith, Congregationalists emphasized the doctrine of true faith manifesting itself in visible signs. Thomas Weld described the manner in which a new member was brought into church fellowship in New England: "The Church to whom he is commended, if they know not the person, make triall of him....before they admit him,"⁷⁵ but he goes on to admit that "Churches may erre in persons as well as doctrines."⁷⁶ It was this fear of making a mistake in discerning a man's faith which prompted the Presbyterian reluctance to refuse any man who made a profession of faith. Nevertheless, Independents felt that the description of particular churches in the New Testament presupposed them to be composed of only the regenerate and they believed that to be content with anything else amounted to gross sin.

Others may take a broader way, if they please; wee dare not. The Church and body is not of so slight account with us, as that we should carelesly and promiscuously admit of every one that offer themselves, without some triall of them, both for the Churches satisfaction and for the account shee must make to Jesus Christ.⁷⁷

The application of various tests to profession of faith in order to determine its genuineness was rarely extended into the realm of infallibility of judgment by moderate Independents. They knew that men were sinful and subject to human error and would have been the last to claim that some do not find their way into even the best of churches who are not truly regenerate. This made no difference. God's Word indicated that the standard of church membership in the New Testament was nothing less than saving faith; anything else would be a lowering of that standard. It must be striven after even if unattainable. In admitting members into particular churches, the people

in Judging are, and may be often deceived; hence de facto it comes to pass, that in great Congregations there may be some found that proved Hypocrites. But still though these Saints may be deceived in the application of the Rule; yet they are to hold fast the Rule it self, that Saints only are fit matter for a Church, and that such only are to be admitted (tho they who have the power of receiving them are often mistaken).⁷⁸

The goal of regenerate membership might be impossible to attain, but to the Independents, that was no reason to abandon the attempt. The holiness and purity of the church universal was too great a thing to be taken lightly, especially when the particular visible churches were supposed to be pictures of an invisible reality.⁷⁹

The importance of this controversy over church membership can hardly be exaggerated in discussing the differences between Presbyterians and Independents. Robert Baillie, one of the Scottish commissioners in London at the Westminster Assembly, was in a peculiarly advantageous position to ascertain the real points of issue between the two parties. And in a letter to his cousin Spang, dated July 5, 1644, he wrote asking for assistance from other reformed churches abroad:

The chief point we wish were proven, ~~the~~ the real authoritie, power, and jurisdiction of Synods and Classical Presbyteries over any the members, or the whole of a particular congregation; also the right of ordinarie professors to the sacrament, though they can give no certaine or satisfactorie, signes of reall regeneration. These two are the main heads.⁸⁰

Baillie considered the two most important issues between Presbyterians and Independents to be subordination of synods and regenerate church membership. Another testimony to the importance of this question of church membership is that of Apollonius of Middleburgh whose book of seven chapters begins with one "Of the Qualification of Church-members."⁸¹ It is plain that he considered this question to be more important than any other in the controversy. The Apologetical Narration of the Independents said that one of the greatest "controversies of these times is about the qualification of the Members of Churches, and the promiscuous receiving and mixture of good and bad."⁸² The writers go on to point out that because there is so much argument about it, they intended to "practise safely"⁸³ only admitting true saints into their churches. All churches in the world could not but admit that churches of saints were true churches...even if there were still room for disagreement over the exclusion of some borderline believers.⁸⁴

Regenerate church membership was the goal of every Independent apologist and most of them included a statement to the effect in their definition of the church. "Visible Saints are the only true and meet matter, whereof a visible Church should be gathered,"⁸⁵ asserted Thomas Hooker. John Cotton agreed: "visible Saints... [are]...to be the subject matter of churches under the New Testament."⁸⁶ Many of the Congregationalists emphasized the aspect of "visible saints" in their definitions of membership.⁸⁷ Even if the word "visible" was missing, almost all Independent definitions of local churches referred specifically to true regeneration.

Quest. What is a true Instituted Gospel-Church? Answ. A true Instituted Gospel-Church is... a company of Believers united together in a holy Band, by special and voluntary agreement; who by the grace and power of Christ in their hearts under the conviction of their duty, do give up themselves to the Lord, and to one another by the will of God; to live and walk together as Saints, in love, peace, and in the constant celebration and practice of all the Laws and worship of Christ.⁸⁸

This same writer made it quite clear that "onely regenerate and converted Persons" were legitimate "materials of a House of God,"⁸⁹ and that church guides should carefully screen all applicants for membership and admit only those truly saved.⁹⁰

The definition by William Ames undoubtedly influenced many later Independent writers. Ames emphasized not only the matter of true belief, but also the importance of a covenanted and holy people. A "particular Church is a society of believers joyned together by a speciall band among themselves."⁹¹ He maintained that particular churches were not to be divorced from their part in showing forth to the world a facsimile of the church invisible and catholic.⁹²

It is a society of believers: because that same thing in profession doth make a church visible, which by its inward and reall nature doth make a mysticall Church, that is, Faith. But because true Faith hath holinesse joyned with it, which it doth effectually worke, Acts 15.9. And so the profession of true faith cannot be disjoyned from the profession of holinesse, therefore the Church is promiscuously and in the same sense called, a society of believers, and of Saints.⁹³

Congregational writers went to great lengths to prove that only regenerate persons should be allowed membership in particular churches. Several of them referred to church members by the name "living stones". Roger Williams made a resounding plea for building the church with these "living stones".⁹⁴ Since there were few people in either England or Scotland who were "living stones", the first duty of Reformers is to evangelize.⁹⁵ "Although the fame and sound is great of Reformation, we Querie Whether a dead soule is capable of any Reformation, untill the first principle of Christianity Repentance (Heb. 6.6.) be found in him."⁹⁶ What was needed was evangelism, not organization.

One of the most interesting defenses of regenerate church membership was that of Henry Burton, who endeavored to prove his contention out of the Roman Catholic writer, Bellarmine:

Ecclesia praecipue et ex intentione, fideles tantum colligit, qui veram fidem in corde habent. Cum autem admiscentur aliqui ficti, qui vere non credunt, id accidit praeter intentionem Ecclesiae si enim eos nosse posset, nunquam admitteret, aut casu admissos, continue excluderet.⁹⁷

Thomas Goodwin was not so inclined to proving matters of divinity from appeals to authors. His proof of the proposition came from the New Testament:

Here is the qualifications of the Members, a Church of Saints, I

Cor.1.2. conformable to which all other Churches were to be, as to the constitution of their Members also, chap.14.33. 'As in all the Churches of the Saints;' All the Churches consisted of Saints then, that were visibly such, as this of Corinth also did.⁹⁸

Goodwin insisted that unregenerate men could not govern, because they were not joined to Christ.⁹⁹ Furthermore, unregenerate men could not edify one another within a fellowship of a church.¹⁰⁰ It was evident, then, that such persons should not be members of any local church because they could fulfill neither of the two principal duties of church members.

One of the principal differences between Presbyterians and Independents was the admitting of unsaved persons into church membership. It was claimed by Independent writers that their rivals favored a mixed multitude of regenerate and unregenerate, but the truth is that many Presbyterian apologists were closer to their Independents brethren than is generally acknowledged. The London Ministers, who represented the extreme right wing of Puritanism, had this surprising statement:

- Q. What are the qualifications of persons who constitute the private members of the visible church?
 A. They ought to be true believers in Christ, to have a competent knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel, to make a sound profession of their faith; and to maintain a holy conversation.¹⁰¹

Independents would not have disagreed with this had the Presbyterians put into practice the theory so clearly set forth. Richard Baxter was no less explicit: "The Independent say that the Members of the Church must be visible Saints. The Presbyterians deny it not."¹⁰²

Robert Baillie, too, admitted that in theory, he agreed with the Independents:

We grant it is earnestly to be wished, and all lawfull meanes would diligently bee used both by Pastors and people, to have all the members of a Church most holy and gracious, and what ever lawfull overture our Brethren can invent for this end, we with all our heart will imbrace it, or else be content to beare much blame, 103

Baillie's statement is not really to the point. It fails to state whether or not these people are to become "holy and gracious" before or after they become members of the

church. If before, then it agreed with Congregational statements; but if after, then it could hardly fulfill the prerequisite of regenerate church membership.

In the Westminster Assembly there seem to have been some Presbyterians whose views on Church membership paralleled those of the Dissenting Brethren. On April 2, 1644, Wilkinson reportedly stated in a debate, that

If the particular churches consist of a mixed company, then are they not true churches; for the true church is separate from the world; called out of this mixture; redeemed from among men; and first fruits to Christ.¹⁰⁴

This was very strong language, if understood in its most obvious interpretation, and would have seriously handicapped any idea of a national church had it been adopted. But from the context of the discussion, it becomes evident that Wilkinson had conflated the properties of the visible and invisible churches and virtually identified the two. The value of his statement lies only in proving that Presbyterians would have liked regenerate church membership as much as their Independent brethren, had they deemed it possible.

The difficulty in assessing Presbyterian statements concerning a desired regenerate church membership is in determining whether the respective writer has adequately distinguished between the visible and invisible churches or whether he has superimposed the one onto the other. For instance, one of the strongest statements made during the period insofar as regenerate membership is concerned, was made by the London ministers:

Quest. What persons have a right in the sight of God to be actual members of the church of Christ?

Ans. Only regenerated and converted persons, such as are married to, and have put on Christ:^{105a}

Such a statement would have pleased any Independent had it been made about particular visible churches as well as the mystical Body of Christ, but the London ministers were only speaking of the latter.¹⁰⁵

Contrary to the idealistic motives of the previously mentioned Presbyterian

writers, the Westminster Confession of Faith unashamedly stated that "the purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error."¹⁰⁶ And although Independents would have admitted that this was true, they would have refused to surrender their attempt to rectify such conditions. Most Presbyterians, on the other hand, looked upon church membership more pessimistically than did the Independents. The possibility of deceit was so great that it could never be totally eradicated, and they refused to draw the lines of membership so narrow as did their Congregational rivals. "The visible Church which Christ instituted in the Gospel is not formally a company of believers meeting for publick edification, by common and joynt consent," maintained Samuel Rutherford.¹⁰⁷

There was too much danger of hypocrites slipping in unawares.

The Church may lawfully adde to the Church visible, such as God addeth not to the Church invisible...and the Church may lawfully cast out of the visible Church, such as Christ hath not cast out of the invisible Church.¹⁰⁸

The thought which plagued many Presbyterians was the possibility of churches acting in error and excluding some who ought not to be excluded not of admitting some who ought not to be admitted. The presence of hypocrites in particular churches did not plague the Presbyterians' mind so much as it did the Independents who tried every means to exclude them. Presbyterians felt that to do so might exclude some real believers. Consequently, a sharp distinction between the requirements for membership in the universal mystical church and for membership in the particular visible church had to be posed.

Understood rightly the true difference between the Mystical and the Visible church, is the qualification of their Members; and do not confound them, as if it were the same persons only, that must be members of both.¹⁰⁹

Independents would have agreed with Baxter's delineation provided the words "must be" might be changed to "should be," and provided that a determined effort was made to secure the fulfillment of the stipulation. But Baxter, again, was convinced that it was absolutely impossible to eliminate hypocrites from the visible church: it was use-

less to try:

The Mystical Church indeed hath none but true Saints. But the visible Church containeth multitudes of Hypocrites; who profess themselves to be what they are not: . . . God would have no Hypocrites cast out, but those who bewray their hypocrisie by impenitency in proved Heresie or gross sin. ¹¹⁰

And to bolster his argument, the author goes on to point out that hypocrites have been found in visible churches ever since the beginning of time. Cain was in the first church of Adam; Ham in Noah's Church; Lot's son-in-law in Lot's church in Sodom; Ishmael in Abraham's church; and Esau was in Isaac's church. ¹¹¹

There are at least four possible explanations for the Presbyterian inclusivist polity. The first we have already disposed of. ¹¹² It was the difficulty involved in determining infallibly (or nearly so) whether or not a person's faith were genuine. Puritans agreed that faith is known by its fruits, but Presbyterians showed a certain reluctance to apply this rule in questions of church membership.

The second possible reason for inclusivism lay in the depth of Christian love. Presbyterians sought to extend the gates of eternal life as wide as possible. It was not universalism which would have been atheism to a Calvinistic Puritan, but represented a tendency to interpret John 3:16 in terms of church membership. They felt that Independents were too narrow, too exclusive, and too unevangelistic. Thomas Edwards expressed the feeling very well: "a man had better receive some of whom there may be some doubt and feare, then discourage and refuse any of Christs little ones. ¹¹³ To "unchurch" people was unchristian, and Independents were guilty of this crime. "We must not break the bruised Reed," warned Richard Baxter, "nor reject the least of the Lambs of Christ, but receive them that are weak in the Faith, and not of our own Heads reject any persons Profession as Incredible, without sufficient Reasons for such a judgment of it. ¹¹⁴ Again, Baxter confessed that he did not favor "narrowing the Church more than Christ himself alloweth us, nor for robbing him of any of his flock. ¹¹⁵ Since the Church was the means of spreading the gospel, and since the

only means of people's being regenerated was in their hearing the preaching of the Word, then it was unevangelistic to exclude any from the Church who otherwise might repent and be born again.¹¹⁶ In 1661, Samuel Rutherford wrote to his brethren in Aberdeen, saying,

If ye exclude all non-converts from the visible city of God
... shall they not be left to the lions and wild beasts of the
forest, even to Jesuits, seminary-priests, and other seducers?

We look upon this visible church, though black and spotted, as
the hospital and guest-house of sick, halt, maimed, and withered
over which Christ is Lord, Physician, and Master: and we
would wait upon those that are not yet in Christ, as our Lord
waited upon us and you both.¹¹⁷

The third possible explanation for Presbyterian inclusivism was their exposition of the parables in Matthew 13. By equating the kingdom of heaven and the visible church, it was concluded that mixed membership was allowable and indeed impossible to remedy until the angelic harvest at the end of the age. The London Ministers asked:

Is not the visible church of Christ a mixed body of sound
and unsound members, of fruitful and barren branches, of
tares and wheat, or good and bad, of sincere believers and
hypocrites, of sheep and goats etc. now as well as it was then?¹¹⁸

Robert Baillie defined a particular church as being

an heterogeneous body, the parts of it are very dissimilar,
some chaffe, some corne, some wheat, some tares; a net
of fishes good and bad; a House wherein are Vessels of honour
and dishonour, a fold of sheep and goats, a tree of green and
withered branches, a table of guests, some with, some without
a wedding garment.¹¹⁹

And Samuel Rutherford asserted that because "the visible Church is in the field of the world", the members of it are not "effectually called, justified, and sanctified."¹²⁰

The visible church is the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 13:

If the visible Church planted and constituted lawfully be a draw-net, wherein are fishes of all sorts; and a house wherein are vessels of silver and gold; and also base vessels of brasse and wood; and a barne-floor wherein are wheat and a chaffe; then a Church is rightly constituted; howbeit there be in it beleevers and unbeleevers, and hypocrites, as members thereof: And there is no more required to make members of the Church visible as visible, but that they be within the net, hearers of the word, within the house as vessels of brasse,

within the barne-wals as chaffe, in likenesse and appearance
like wheat. 121

The St. Andrews' professor would make only one qualification for membership in the visible church, "hearing the Word";¹²² Independents would have insisted on some visible response to the Word before offering membership. Thus the two parties emphasized two different aspects of the same question. Both wanted to evangelize the people, but one wished to incorporate the people into particular churches first in order to better be evangelized; the other wished the testimony of a holy visible church to evangelize people even though they were not allowed membership. Motives were the same; the methods distinguished.

A fourth possible reason for Presbyterian inclusivism was the clarion call for unity. Presbyterians resented Independent refusals to join with churches of unregenerate memberships. They complained that the real issue was not so much the quality of members as it was the separation of brethren. "The true state of the question is, wether it be necessary to separate from a Church, wherein wee get no satisfaction of the true grace of every Member at their first admission," said Robert Baillie.¹²³ The most objectionable thing to Baillie was that the Independent doctrine of separation from unregenerate churches was really a separation¹²⁴ from all the reformed churches, and as we have already seen, this was the kiss of death for a Scottish Presbyterian.

There can be little doubt, that if the Independent brethren had not insisted on separating from other churches over the question of membership, then there would have been no Presbyterian-Independent controversy. Unity was so important to Presbyterians that they considered all else subservient. Richard Baxter stated the case when he wrote: "It is a gross oversight of them that look at nothing but the Regeneration of the members, as essential to the Church, and takes Unity to be but a separable Accident."¹²⁵ Thomas Goodwin and other Independents would have re-

torted that true unity can only be accomplished through regenerated souls having been knitted together by the Holy Spirit. Theirs was always a spiritual unity, never a physical uniformity.¹²⁶ It was here that Presbyterian apologists were open to their greatest criticism, for they often confused the two terms.

SUMMARY

Section A & B: The issue of national churches was one of the prime targets of Independent criticism in the 1640's and Presbyterians were hard pressed to defend their ideas either from the pages of the New or Old Testament to the mutual agreement of their ecclesiastical rivals. Later, in the decade following especially, many Congregational men were compromised in accepting preferments under Cromwell's establishment, and much of their force of argument against national churches was dissipated by this ensuing inconsistency.

Section C: In close connection with controversy over national churches and membership was the issue of baptism. Independents and Presbyterians disagreed over the proper recipients of the sacrament; the former confining it to the children of godly parents who were members of some particular church, the latter extending the privilege to all the children in the kingdom.

Section D: Of primary importance to the national church argument was the whole matter of membership. Puritans could not agree on the qualifications for church membership and this contributed fuel to the Presbyterian-Independent squabbles. Congregationalists stood for regenerate membership; Synodical men for the church multitudinous and mixed. Both agreed that it would be a great boon to have all members true saints, but they disagreed on the method of attaining such a goal and Presbyterians were moved by just as noble motives in their concept as Independents were in theirs.

¹This is a very good definition of a national church from a Presbyterian standpoint. It is from Samuel Hudson, The Essence and Unitie of the Church Catholike Visible, And the Prioritie there of in regard of Particular Churches Discussed. (London: 1645), p. 6. (mispage 2).

²William Barlet, ΕΧΝΟΤΡΑΨΙΑ or a Model of the Primitive Congregational way: etc. (London: 1647), "Epistle Dedicatory", unpagged.

³Jeremiah Burroughs, Vindication, p. 23, as cited by Berndt Gustafsson, The Five Dissenting Brethren: A Study On the Dutch Background of Their Independentism (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1955), p. 47.

⁴Loc. cit. cf. John Owen, who questioned whether "a National Church...in its

best state imaginable, was ever instituted by Christ," in *Of Schisme*, pp. 222, 238, 240, 255f., as cited in Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Visible Saints* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 64.

⁵ Thomas Goodwin, *Of the Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ* (Works, 1696 ed.), p. 61, IV. Cf. Roger Williams, *Queries of Highest Consideration Proposed to Mr. Tho. Goodwin*, et. al. (London: 1644), 6, "Acts 10. 35 ... That in every Nation he that feares God, etc." is not the same as "every nation that feares God." In this section, where I deal with Goodwin's arguments against national churches, I have tried to paraphrase his wording for the sake of brevity. I do not do so tendentiously.

⁶ Thomas Goodwin, *The Great Interest of States and Kingdoms. A Sermon Preached at the Late Fast Before the Commons House of Parliament. Feb. 25, 1645* (Works: Edinburgh edition of 1861, James Nichol), p. 46, XII.

⁷ Goodwin, *Constitution of Churches*, op. cit., p. 162.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁹ Goodwin, *Constitution of Churches*, op. cit., p. 378.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 406.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 405.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 406.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹⁴ In Thomas Goodwin's writings, the unchristian rabble have no rights of rule under God except they repent. He was no leveller. The "people" always refer to "the people who are saints".

¹⁷ Williams, op. cit., p. 7. It is well worth noting that this tract is addressed to the Independent leaders as well as to the Scottish Commissioners in London. The obvious implication is that Roger Williams already suspected Goodwin and the other moderate Independents of approving of National Churches... in spite of literature to the contrary. It is also a solemn and surprising fact that there was not one debate (which we have discovered) in the Westminster Assembly over the subject of national churches. The four great documents of the Assembly are strangely silent about any such discussion. Lightfoot's *Journal*, Gillespie's *Notes*, Baillie's *Letters*, and the *Minutes* record every kind of debate except one about national churches. Many of the points at issue in the Assembly concerned indirectly the over-all question of an establishment, but it is still significant that the Independents in the Assembly seem not to have once suggested that there ought not to be a national church of any kind. One wonders if the material in Thomas Goodwin's *Constitution of Churches* was broached in the debates or added post eventum. The lack of corroborating evidence favors the latter possibility. Subsequent history supports the conclusion that the Independents never did advocate anything but a modified national church contingent on their concept of gathered churches.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁹ *One Blow More at Babylon*: etc. (London: 1650), p. 6.

²⁰ Goodwin, *Constitution of Churches*, op. cit., p. 174.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 89.

²³ Henry Burton, *A Vindication of Churches, commonly called Independents*: etc. (London: 1644), p. 31.

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John Bastwick e.g., in his Independency Examined, Unmasked, and Refuted (London: 1656), "Epistle to the Reader," unpagged, accuses William Dell of numerous heresies recently preached by him to the army. The second mentioned heresy is that Dell has denied a national church in both the Old and the New Testaments. Even if this were a true summary of Dell's position, it would not be accurate to attribute such extremes to Independency as a whole.

25

Vide e.g. Richard Sibbes, A Breathing After God, p. 91, "The Church of the Jewes was a National Church, there was but one Place, and one Tabernacle, but now God hath erected particular Tabernacles, every particular Church and Congregation under one Pastor, their meeting is the Church of God, a several Church. INDEPENDENT," as cited by Bartlet, op. cit., p. 44. The interesting thing about this quotation is that it all but proves one of the most outstanding Puritans of the age to have been a Congregationalist. Thomas Goodwin was influenced by Richard Sibbes, was a personal friend of his at Cambridge in the 1620's and early 1630's, and published several books of Sibbes.

26 Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 59.

27 Ibid., p. 161.

28 Williams, op. cit., p. 6.

29 Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries etc. (London: 1644), p. 60.

30 Guilielmus Apollonii, A Consideration of Certain Controversies at this time agitated in the Kingdome of England, Concerning the Government of the Church of God, etc. (London: 1645), p. 28.

31 It is worth noting that Apollonius continues to draw his Old Testament proof texts forth, even if he has denied the analogy of Jewish and Christian Churches.

32 William Prinne, Twelve Considerable Serious Questions touching Church Government: etc. (London: 1644), p. 5, number "9". As an example of Presbyterian urgency in seeking a refuge somewhere in the New Testament, Prinne gives the following references to prove that national churches were predicted by Jesus and His disciples. In order to see their inappropriateness we give them here: (1) Luke 2:32, (2) Mar. 13:10, (3) Acts 13:46, 47, 48, (4) Rom. 10:18, 19, 20.

33 Ibid., p. 6. We have already noted, supra, how this theory was similar to the Independent doctrine of progressive interpretation of scripture.

34 Loc. cit.

35 Douglas Nobbs, "Philip Nye of Church and State", The Cambridge Historical Journal, Vol. V (1935), no. III, p. 59. Vol. V. contains nos. 1, 2, 3 (Cambridge: University Press, 1935, 1936, 1937).

36 Ibid., pp. 41, 42. 37 Loc. cit. 38 Ibid., p. 47. 39 Loc. cit. 40 Loc. cit.

41 Ibid., p. 57. One regrettable feature of Nobbs's article is that he fails to

distinguish properly between Philip Nye's views and Erastianism. On p.57, e.g., he had a remarkable opportunity, but omits any mention of such distinction.

⁴² Vide Gustafsson, op. cit., p.30. Some Puritans refused to use church bells because they were popish.

⁴³ Ibid., p.43.

⁴⁴ David Masson, The Life of John Milton: Narrated in Connexion with The Political, Ecclesiastical, and Literary History of His Time. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1859-1894), p.578, II.

⁴⁵ Some of the Presbyterian defenders misunderstood moderate Independents on this point. Robert Baillie in A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London: 1646), p.117, averred: "The ancient way of maintenance by Tythes or Lands, or set Stipends, they [i.e. Independents] do refuse." Ephraim Pagitt, Heresiography: etc. (London: fourth edition, 1647, p.87, concurred with his Scottish cohort: "all tiths and set maintenances of Ministers they [i.e. Independents] cry down." The New England Independent position was far to the left of Goodwin and many other English Congregationalists. Vide Richard Mather, Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed, etc. (London: 1646), p.77; John Norton, Responsio ad Totam Quaestionum etc. (Londini: 1648), p.143ff., chp. XIV, "De Stipendiis Ministrorum". The question of tithing brought to the fore once again the whole issue of the Old Testament in relation to the New, especially the relationship between Old Testament priest and New Testament presbyter. Thomas Goodwin, in his Government, op. cit., p.324, attempted to eliminate entirely the Old Testament from his proof of New Testament ministerial maintenance. Nevertheless, he violated his rule by appealing to the analogy of the Levites, p.327, ibid. A powerful statement of pure voluntarism appears on p.326, ibid. Goodwin often netted two or three hundred pounds a year----in an age when day laborers received six pence a day for their toils! There is no doubt but that some Presbyterians were jealous. Baillie once explained Independent financial successes on this ground: "it hath been their providence to admit none or few poor members of their Congregations." Vide the Dissuasive, op. cit., p.117, for this nasty charge.

⁴⁶ Albert Peel, "Congregationalism in 1655", Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society, XIII (1937-1939), pp.172,173. William Bridge was one of the Independent obstructionists in the Westminster Assembly.

⁴⁷ Jordan, op. cit., p.246, III.

⁴⁸ Adam Steuart, Some Observations and Annotations Upon the Apologeticall Narration, etc. (London: 1643), p.19. Gustafsson, op. cit., p.48, believes that the Apologists were turned toward the particular church concept only temporarily as a result of their exile in Holland and that they never really gave up the idea of a truly national church.

⁴⁹ These are given by Philip Schaff, in his The Creeds of Christendom with A History and Critical Notes (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878), p.830, I.

⁵⁰ S.W. Carruthers, The Westminster Confession of Faith (Manchester: R. Aikman and Son, 1937), p.137, Chap. XXIV: Sect. II, "Of Marriage and Divorce". It was plain that the Westminster Divines meant to make room for the infants of godly parents

in the visible church. It is significant that the only scripture given to prove the point of this "godly seed" being in the church, was Malachi 2:15. Thus, the old controversy between the Old and New Testaments again showed itself. Vide supra.

51

Carruthers, op. cit., p.139, Chap XXV: Sect.II, "Of the Church". The Savoy Declaration of the Independents did not allow infant membership in the church. Vide Albert Peel (ed.), The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, 1658 (London: Independent Press, 1939), p.60. Chapter XXV of the Westminster Confession was charged by the Savoy group. Section II was changed and III-IV omitted. Cf. Richard Baxter, Plain Scripture Proof of Infants Church-membership and Baptism. (4th ed., London: 1656); et John Cotton, The ground and ends of the baptisme of the children of the faithfull (London: 1647).

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Vide William Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the holy Scriptures, and the Interpreters thereof, and brought into Method (London: n.d.), p.140.

53

George Gillespie, in his Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster. etc. (ed. by David Meek, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1844), p.55, April 26, 1644, recorded that a committee on membership proposed a plan to which Independents and many Presbyterians would have agreed: "The proposition offered by the Committee was, That particular visible churches in the primitive times did consist of visible saints and believers; to wit, such as being of age did profess faith in Christ, and obedience to Christ, according to the rule of faith and life taught by Christ and his apostles." But when it came before the Assembly, "It was objected, that this proposition imports that infants are not members of a visible church." And after debate, the words "and of their children" was added to the proposition.

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Vide John Lightfoot, The Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines: etc. (Vol. XIII, Works, ed. by John Rogers Pitman, London: 1824), p.296. The Independents seem not to have taken part in the early phases of this debate, but they soon became involved.

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David Laing (ed.), The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, 1841), p.218, II. Baillie also referred to this in his A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London: 1646), p.119, "they [i.e. the Independents] deny foederall holinesse of Christian children: against this Tho. Goodwin did preach, and deny openly that common distinction of Protestants of reall and foederall holinesse, requiring in every Infant to be baptized a reall and inherent sactity," which, as Baillie averred, could only lead to Anabaptism and Arminianism. And because of "these inextricable difficulties did... Mr. Goodwin move to stop the Presse that it went not on with his Sermons against the Anabaptists..." There could very easily be an element of truth in what Baillie said about why Goodwin did not publish his sermons, because the fact remains that these sermons have not come down to us (so far as we know). It is also true that Goodwin's point of view was somewhat revolutionary. Vide e.g. William Rathband A Briefe Narration of Some Church Courses Held in Opinion and Practise in the Churches lately erected in New England (London: 1644), p.5. This tract was answered by Thomas Weld, in his An Answer to W.R. his Narration of the Opinions and Practises of the Churches in New England (London: 1644). Cf. Richard Mather, Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed, In an Answer of the Elders of the severall churches in New-England To two and thirty Questions,

sent over to them by divers Ministers in England, to declare their judgments therein. etc. (London: 1643), p. 22. For a typical presbyterian reformed viewpoint, vide Guilielmus Apollonii, A Consideration of Certain Controversies at this time agitated in the Kingdome of England, Concerning the Government of the Church of God. etc. (London: 1645), p. 84. It is obvious that Thomas Goodwin was really quite alone in his peculiar view of baptism and of federal holiness and especially of I Cor. 7. Georgii Hornii, in his Historia Ecclesiastica (M. Leydecker editit. 1687), p. 448 also adverts to Thomas Goodwin's being one of the first to deny federal holiness.

⁵⁶ Lightfoot's Journal, op. cit., p. 315, Oct. 9th, 1644.

⁵⁷ Loc. cit., Independents always tended to make more certain of the parents' faith before administering infant baptism.

⁵⁸ The question was this, "if circumcision equals baptism, then what about females under the Old Testament and how can we baptise both sexes under the New?" Goodwin answered in words which seemed to indicate a certain amount of confusion. Cf. Gillespie's Notes, op. cit., p. 81; Thomas Goodwin, Of the Constitution, op. cit., p. 377, 166, IV (1696 ed.); et Goodwin's Question and Answer, op. cit., p. 8, IV (1696 ed.). Presbyterians equated baptism and circumcision. Cf. Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p. 92.

⁵⁹ It was surprising how near Thomas Goodwin's doctrine of baptism was to antipedobaptism, but this proximity of Congregationalists to Baptists should not be over-emphasized. Robert Baillie, e.g., in his The Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time, Vindicated from the Exceptions of Mr. Cotton and Mr. Tombes. (London: 1655), p. 77, accuses the Baptist Tombes, of having attempted to "vilifie M. Thomas Goodwin" concerning infant baptism. And wonder of wonders, Baillie defends Goodwin, whose baptismal views he did not share even a little! Here, then, is a case of Congregationalist and Presbyterian joining together against a Baptist.

⁶⁰ Vide Gillespie, Notes, op. cit., p. 89, Oct. 9, 1644. There were many tracts published on the subject of believer's baptism. Cf. Samuel Chidley's A Christian plea for Christian's baptisme mentioned by W. T. Whitley, "The Westminster Assembly and the Baptists," The Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England, vol. 3. (1924-1927), p. 128.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 90, Oct. 9, 1644. Some of the Presbyterians were close to the Independent concept of baptising only covenanted parents' children, even though, in general, Presbyterians tended to repudiate church covenants as extra-biblical.

⁶² Vide Gillespie, Notes, op. cit., p. 90, Oct. 10th, 1644.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 91, Oct. 10th, 1644. In the discussion of the questions to be addressed to the parents before baptism was to be administered to an infant, there was a last minute debate and revision of questions which showed a certain tendency of the Westminster Assembly divines toward the view later adopted by the Independents at the Savoy in 1658, making more sure of the parents' faith. A. F. Mitchell, in his The Westminster Assembly (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1883), p. 219n., gives these questions as finally passed by Parliament and recorded in the Journals of the House of Commons, vol. IV, P. 70.

⁶⁴ Vide Alexander F. Mitchell et John Struthers (eds.), Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines etc. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), p. 173, Sess. 561, Dec. 25th, 1645.

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Baillie, Journals, op. cit., p.343, II. Cf. Nuttall, Visible Saints, op. cit., p.36, who points out that many churches displayed very tolerant attitudes toward people with variant views of baptism. Sometimes, there were both pedo-baptists and anti-pedo-baptists in the same church. That Thomas Goodwin was very tolerant of the Baptists is also supported by the fact that he (et al) sent a letter to Massachusetts Colony, dated March 25, 1669, requesting his brethren there not to persecute the Baptists, lest it reflect on the Independents at home. Vide Cotton Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana: etc. (Hartford reprint: Silas Andrus & Son, 1853), p.534, II. G. P. Gooch, English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge: University Press, 1927), p.110, misinterprets this reference of Mather. Mather did not say that Owen and Thomas Goodwin were anabaptists and Gooch is wrong for saying so.

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Mitchell et Struthers, Minutes, op. cit., p.280, Sess.704, Sept. 11, 1646.

67

Vide e.g. Richard Mather, Church Government, op. cit., pp.1,2, questions 1-8; Thomas Hooker, A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline. etc. (London: 1648), "The Preface", unpagged; William Ames, Conscience with The Power and Cases Thereof (English edition translated from Latin version of 1652; English version published in 1639), p.81.

68

Vide e.g. Baillie, Dissuasive, op. cit., p.119; Apollonius, Certain Controversies, op. cit., p.84; Samuel Rutherford, a Peaceable and Temperate Plea For Pauls Presbyterie In Scotland, etc. (London: 1642), proposition number "12" et Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p.186;

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Presbyterians, like Samuel Rutherford, in his The Due Right of Presbyteries etc. (London: 1644), p.290ff, usually gave both ordinances and the Keys to the catholic visible church. But Independents, although admitting that water baptism was given to the universal church (on the basis of Acts 8), steadfastly maintained that the Lord's Supper was given to particular churches to preserve its purity. For this reason, Congregationalists practiced closed communion refusing to give the sacrament to any but their own members. One of the "Humble Proposals" of John Owen and Thomas Goodwin was that there should be no obligatory taking or administering of the sacrament in Cromwell's religious establishment. Vide F.J. Powicke, "The Independents of 1652," Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society, IX (1924-1926), p.23f, number 10. In New England, they administered "the seals of the Covenant not to all, but only to believers, or their seed, which are either in covenant with our selves or with some other Church of Christ," cited from Thomas Weld, A Brief Narration of the Practices of the Churches in New England etc. (London: 1645), p.77. And Rutherford criticized John Cotton's The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England because it sponsored "closed communion." Vide his Due Right, op. cit., p.185. Against this, Thomas Goodwin was adamant. Vide his Of the Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ (Works: 1696), p.261, IV. And at Oxford, Goodwin seems to have consistently maintained his position, because there is a certificate by Henry Hunt, fellow of Magdalen College, and J. Dale, complaining about Goodwin's refusing to administer the sacrament in the college. Vide Rawlinson D. 317.72. M.S. in the Bodleian. In one of his pieces, Goodwin almost seems to reject this orthodox Independent position on closed communion. He implies that he would be willing to celebrate the Table occasionally with the Presbyterians thus

signifying his love and peace with them. Vide his Christ the Universal Peace-Maker: or the Reconciliation of all the People of God, Notwithstanding their Differences, Enmities (London: 1651), p. 43ff., Section III. Some of these same sentiments are found in Jeremiah Burroughes's Irenicum, To The Lovers of Truth and Peace, etc. (London: 1646), "To the Reader", unpagged.

⁷⁰ Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 377, 378, IV.

⁷¹ Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 233. Cf. Richard Baxter, Church Concord: etc. (London: 1691), p. 16. We may note here that Thomas Goodwin was a seventeenth century precursor of modern Congregationalism which now extends the rights of infant baptism to those outside particular church membership.

⁷² According to John Lightfoot's Journal, op. cit., p. 285, there was a debate in the Westminster Assembly on June 14th, 1644, concerning the Directory for the Public Worship of God. Some of the divines had such a lofty regard for sincerity that they scrupled having congregations praise God for election when some might not be elected!"

⁷³ S. W. Carruthers, The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly (Philadelphia: published by the Presbyterian Historical Societies of England and America, 1943), p. 113, Article XII, of the thirty-nine articles, "Of Good Works". The parts within the brackets were either added or altered by the Assembly.

⁷⁴ Simpson, op. cit., p. 25. The real differences between Presbyterians and Independents was not so much over this "objective test" as it was in the stringency with which it was to be applied. Cf. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Visible Saints (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 160.

⁷⁵ [Thomas Weld], A Brief Narration of the Practices of the Churches in New-England. Written in private to one that desired information therein: by an Inhabitant there, a friend to Truth and Peace. (London: 1645), p. 10.

⁷⁶ Loc. cit.

⁷⁷ Henry Burton, A Vindication of Churches, commonly called Independent: etc. (London: 1644), p. 46. In the matter of "tests" for true sainthood, it would appear that the Independents followed John Calvin and the Presbyterians tended more to follow Luther. The former had three tests for being a saint: (1) a confession of faith; (2) a disciplined life; (3) participation in the sacraments. Later, all three of these ("creed, deed, and sacrament") appeared in New England Independency. Luther, however, denied any test as being able to determine sainthood. For this rather interesting point, vide Roland H. Bainton, The Travail of Religious Liberty (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), p. 65.

⁷⁸ Thomas Goodwin, Of the Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ (Works, 1696 ed.), p. 250, IV.

⁷⁹ Thomas Goodwin always insisted that the same standards ought to prevail for the visible church as for the universal mystical. Local churches were "to make

up a Body to Christ, as well as the Mystical" and should therefore be regenerate: vide Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.249.

⁸⁰ David Laing (ed.), The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, 1841), p.205, II, (*italics mine*).

⁸¹ Guilielmus Apollonii, A Consideration of Certain Controversies at this time agitated in the Kingdome of England, Concerning the Government of the Church of God, etc. (London: 1645), p.Iff. Cf. Johannem Nortonum, Responsio ad Totam Quaestionum Syllogen a clarissimo Viro Domino Guilielmo Apollonio, Ecclesiae Middleburgensis Pastore, propositam. Ad componendas Controversias quasdam circa Politiam Ecclesiasticam in Anglia nunc temporis agitates spectantem. (Londini: 1648), p.Iff. "cap. I De Qualificatione Membrorum Ecclesiae". There is an epistle to the reader in the beginning of this latter book written by Thomas Goodwin, who evidently helped publish it in England.

⁸² An Apologeticall Narration Humbly Submitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament by Tho. Goodwin, et al. (London: 1643), p.II.

⁸³ Loc. cit.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.12.

⁸⁵ Thomas Hooker, A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline. etc. (London: 1648), "The Preface," unpagd. Cf. p.14, ibid.

⁸⁶ John Cotton, The Keyes Of the Kingdom of Heaven, and Power thereof, according to the Word of God. etc. (London: 1644), p.13.

⁸⁷ Cf. John Brinsley, The Araignment of the Present Schism of New Separation in Old England, Together With a serious Recommendation of Church-Unity and Uniformity. As it was lately presented to the Church of God at Great Yarmouth. (London: 1646), p.30; et William Seigwich, Scripture A Perfect Rule For Church-Government: (London: n.d.) p.4.

⁸⁸ Stephen Ford, A Gospel-Church or God's Holy Temple Opened etc. (London: 1675), p.5.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.22.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.56.

⁹¹ William Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the holy Scriptures, and the Interpreters thereof, and brought into Method. (London: n.d.), p.139f.

⁹² Ibid., p.140.

⁹³ The influence of William Ames on the thinking of Thomas Goodwin is not difficult to trace in this respect. Cf. Goodwin's Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.250; et Marrow, op. cit., p.140.

⁹⁴ Vide Roger Williams, Queries of Highest Consideration Proposed to Mr. Tho. Goodwin, et al. etc. (London: 1644), p. 3, querie III. Cf. William Dell, The Building, Beauty, Teaching, and Establishment of the truly Christian and Spiritual Church. etc. (London: 1651), p. 70.

⁹⁵ Williams, op. cit., p. 4, querie IV.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 4, querie V.

⁹⁷ Burton, A Vindication, op. cit., p. 46, citing Bellarmine's de Eccles., I. 3. c. 10.

⁹⁸ Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 70. Paul's letter to the Corinthian Church caused some Presbyterian defenders a great deal of trouble. E. g. George Gillespie, in his An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland, etc. (Edinburgh: 1641), p. 112f. attempted to explain away the grammar of I Cor.

⁹⁹ Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 249.

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Loc. cit.

¹⁰¹ The Divine Right of Church Government by Sundry Ministers of Christ within the City of London (Paisley reprint: 1799), p. 255. This was originally published in London, 1646.

¹⁰² Richard Baxter, Church Concord: etc. (London: 1691), p. 15. Chap. III, "Qualification of Church Members", (p. 15ff.) is worth studying on this complex issue. Baxter even quotes Samuel Rutherford in support of regenerate membership. Vide p. 16, ibid. But this quotation from the Due Right of Presbyteries, p. 231 hardly coincides with other material which we have given elsewhere from the same work. Baxter was always plagued by oversimplification of complex problems in his incessant search for unity, and sometimes (as here) he even distorts an author's point of view in order to give the appearance of agreement with the Independents. Actually, Samuel Rutherford was as far from the Congregational theory of regenerate membership as east is from west.

¹⁰³ Robert Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London: 1646), p. 516 (mispage, it should be p. 156).

¹⁰⁴ Lightfoot, Journal, op. cit., p. 236.

^{105a} Divine Right of Church Government, op. cit., pp. 208-218. This is a very excellent statement of the case, one of the best we have found in the period.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Apollonius, Certain Controversies, op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ S. W. Carruthers, The Westminster Confession of Faith (Manchester: R. Aikman and Son, 1937), p. 140, Chap. XXV, Sect. V.

¹⁰⁷ Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries etc. (London: 1644), p. 3. There are strong indications that many Presbyterian writers repudiated the regenerate church membership doctrine because to espouse it would of necessity have involved a corresponding grant of a democratic franchise to the whole membership. Cf. Baillie, Dissuasive, op. cit., p. 160; Gillespie, An Assertion, op. cit., p. 113; et Poole, A Moderate Enquiry, pp. 140, 141.

- ¹⁰⁸ Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p.186. Cf. Baillie, Dissuasive, op. cit., p.160; et Divine Right of Church Government, op. cit., p.208;
- ¹⁰⁹ Richard Baxter, The Cure of Church-divisions: etc. (London: 1670), p.33, *italics mine*.
- ¹¹⁰ Loc. cit.
- ¹¹¹ Ibid., p.34.
- ¹¹² Supra.
- ¹¹³ Thomas Edwards, Antapologia: or A Full Answer to the Apologeticall Narration of Mr. Goodwin, et. al. (London: 1646), p.77.
- ¹¹⁴ Richard Baxter, Church-Concord, op. cit., p.18. One of Baillie's favorite lines of attack on the Independents was that they "unchurched" people. In New England, 20,000 people were "kept out of the Churches," he wrote in his The Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time, Vindicated from the Exceptions of Mr. Cotton and Mr. Tombes. (London: 1655), p.39. And in the Dissuasive, itself, he had written that "the fruits of Independency in New England... was to ...put thousands of Christians in the condition of Pagans" (op. cit., p.59). Probably it would not be wrong to say that of all the Puritan parties, Presbyterians more than any others were moved by the fear of unchurching people.
- ¹¹⁵ J.M. Lloyd Thomas (ed.), The Autobiography of Richard Baxter (Everyman's Library, London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1931), p.16.
- ¹¹⁶ This criticism of the Independents was highly unjustified. Vide infra on evangelism.
- ¹¹⁷ Andrew A. Bonar (ed.), Letters of Samuel Rutherford (Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, reprint of 1891 ed.), pp.706, 707, Letter no. CCLXIV to the "Brethren in Aberdeen (1661). Cf. Samuel Rutherford, A Survey of the Survey of that Summe of Church-Discipline Penned by Mr. Thomas Hooker, Late Pastor of the Church at Hartford upon Connecticut in New England. etc. (London: 1648), "The Preface to the Reader," unpagged, "we judge it not warrantable to say, that the servants are to call and invite none to the marriage-banquet, but such as they look on as regenerate, and clothed with the wedding garment."
- ¹¹⁸ Divine Right of Church Government. op. cit., p.45 (*italics mine*). The contentions of the London Ministers were supported by Samuel Hudson, in his The Essence and Unitle of the Church Catholike Visible, And the Prioritie thereof in regard of Particular Churches Discussed (London: 1645), p.14. Against these claims, many Independents voiced strong objections. E.g. Stephen Ford, A Gospel-Church or God's Holy Temple Opened. etc. (London: 1675), p.46, 47; William Barlet IX NOT PAID or a Model of the Primitive Congregational way: etc. (London: 1647), p.50; Surprisingly, however, all of the great Independent leaders did not agree with Ford and Barlet. Thomas Goodwin seems not to have discussed the parable of the tares or of the

net of fishes anywhere in his entire works. Furthermore, Sidrach Simpson (another of the Westminster Assembly Independents and one of the signers of the Apologetical Narration) in his sermon called Reformation's Preservation: Opened In a Sermon Preached at Westminster before the Honourable House of Commons, at the late solemn Fast, July 26, 1643. (London: 1643), p. 7, gave the whole case away by admitting that the kingdome of heaven was the same as the New Testament Church. It is conjectural how such Independents could defend their doctrine of regenerate membership after having given away one of the most important issues in the whole controversy.

¹¹⁹ Robert Baillie, Dissuasive, op. cit., p. 159, 160.

¹²⁰ Samuel Rutherford, A Peaceable and Temperate Plea For Pauls Presbyterie In Scotland, etc. (London: 1642), p. 95.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 101.

¹²² Cf. Gillespie, An Assertion, op. cit., p. 32, for another writer who wanted "hearers" in the church as well as ministers and elders.

¹²³ Baillie, Dissuasive, op. cit., p. 516 (mispaged, it should be p. 156).

¹²⁴ One of the most pronounced of the Presbyterian fears was the bete noire of schism or separation. Few synodical writers failed to speak of this terrible evil in the Church. Vide e.g. Baillie's Journals op. cit., p. 122, II; Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., epistle "To the Reader, unpagged; Stephen Marshall, Sermon... on The Unity of the Saints (London: 1652), pp. 21, 23; John Brinsley, The Araignment of the Present Schism etc. (London: 1646), unpagged epistle "To the Christian Reader"; Daniel Cawdrey, Independencie A Great Schism (London: 1651), p. 1; Richard Baxter, True and Only Way of Concord (London: 1680), p. 1ff, Part III.

But in the middle of the 1640's, none of the Independent leaders in England were Separatists or schismatics. They universally denied the charge. Vide e.g. The Savoy Declaration (ed. by Albert Peel, London: Independent Press, 1939), p. 45; An Apologeticall Narration (London: 1643), pp. 6, 23; William Bridge, Joabs Counsell (London: 1643), p. 8f; Jeremiah Burroughs, Irenicum (London: 1646), epistle "To the Reader, unpagged; John Owen, The Duty of Pastors and People (London: 1644), p. 48.

¹²⁵ Richard Baxter, The True and Only Way of Concord of All the Christian Churches: etc. (London: 1680), p. 46, Part I.

¹²⁶ The question of uniformity was one of the divisive aspects in the Presbyterian-Independent Controversy and we have relegated it to a footnote (instead of a lengthy chapter) only because others have pursued the subject at some length already. W.K. Jordan is a most noteworthy example.

CHAPTER XII

THE CONCEPT OF THE CHURCH (CONT.)

SECTION II: GATHERED CHURCHES AND THE CONTROVERSY

Since there was no practical method of guaranteeing regenerate church membership within a national church, Independents had to resort to a system of "gathered churches".¹ And by gathering churches out of existing churches, the flames of controversy reached their fiercest intensity, for Presbyterians considered this procedure to be unchristian, unloving, schismatical, and dangerous to the state.

Historically, early Presbyterianism had been recruited from the conforming Puritan party and had never lost sight of the goal of a Christian nation wherein the Church and State were synonymous and where ecclesiastical and political unity interacted and reinforced each other. But early Congregationalism was recruited from the non-conforming Puritans who tended to emphasize the "gathered church" where God's elected people were called out of the unbelieving world into a holy brotherhood. The former sacrificed purity in order to gain unity; the latter sacrificed unity to maintain purity.

By the time of the 1640's, one of the main issues in the controversy was church

membership and the solution to this problem involved the question of parochial versus gathered churches. Independents said that the principal thing in church membership was fellowship with God and with one another.² Therefore, parochial memberships were not allowable: "a Union of hearts rather than a vicinity of Houses, is to make up a Congregation according to the New Testament."³

Debates over gathered churches were a recurring feature of the Westminster Assembly even though there was never any question of a national church debated within the Assembly. The first reference to this problem is in Lightfoot's Journal, in an entry for November 14, 1643.⁴ It was reported that Independents were gathering congregations in the city of London and it was decided that Benjamin Rudyard should bring in a report on it. Six days later, a petition was presented to the Assembly from the ministers of London requesting, among other things, that something be done to keep the Independents from gathering churches.⁵ It was quite evident that the divines in Westminster were deeply concerned over the phenomenal success of these Independent preachers who were taking away many of the flocks of the regular ministry. On December 28th, 1643, Lightfoot records that the Independents in the Assembly had signed a document agreeing to forego any further gathering of churches, but they also refused to resign the churches they already had.⁶

The question immediately arises, "why did the Independent leaders sign such an agreement that was so threatening to their cause and their concept of the Church?" Of course, Thomas Edwards had a typically vindictive solution. The Independents had agreed to the document, because they did not want to ascribe "greater prejudice" to their cause in the eyes of the authorities and because they could "not well avoid it."⁷ But the facts of the case seem to indicate some other answer. To begin with, there is no indication that the Independent leaders in the Assembly had gathered any churches up till this time.⁸ Another point to be borne in mind is the fact that this agreement provided for one of the crucial matters that the Independent brethren

were fighting for in the Assembly...i.e. toleration of their moderate Independency:

That it is not to bee doubted, but the councells of the Assembly of Divines, and the care of the Parliament will be not onely to reforme and set up Religion throughout the Nation, but will concurre to preserve whatever shall appeare to be the rights of particular Congregations, according to the Word, and to beare with such whose Consciencs cannot in all things conforme to the publike Rule, so farre as the word of God would have them borne withall.⁹

Such wording could only have been a great concession to the Independents.¹⁰ It promised them recognition of the status quo (so that they could keep their existing churches) and it promised them a practical toleration. When the Presbyterians did not keep their bargain in the months which followed, Independents were embittered and their only recourse was to appeal to Parliament in their Apologeticall Narration.¹¹ It is also to be noted that this agreement was not perpetual, but was only for the present duration of time while the Assembly debated the question of dependence of churches.¹² But perhaps the most obvious reason why the Independent leaders agreed to such a document, was that their basic concept of the gathered church would not have been affected by it. Independents did not hold that churches should be built around the personality of the minister. Thomas Goodwin wrote:

That as the Saints and Members of Christ Mystical, are only fit matter for this Church; so they have an immediate Independent Power and Authority from Jesus Christ, their immediate Head and King, to gather and combine themselves in such an Assembly, without expecting any Warrant from any Governors, what ever on earth.¹³

The right to gather churches did not rest in the minister, but in the people and to deny them the right to gather themselves into churches amounted to a denial of the crown rights of Christ in the lives of His people. Presbyterians may have felt that Independent preachers gathered congregations around their persons, but they had misinterpreted Congregational theory. From this standpoint, therefore, Goodwin and the other Independent leaders in the Assembly could readily agree not to gather churches. To do so would have invalidated all that they were saying about the "people's

rights".

Unfortunately, the signing of the agreement to refrain from gathering churches did not preclude further debate in the Assembly over the issue. Three months later, on March 19, 1644, Lightfoot again records a speech by Calamy, who evidently had begun to see the advantage of gathering churches. The Independents outside the Assembly were having such success that Calamy thought that it was a good idea... providing that Presbyterians had the sole right to engage in it.¹⁴ There was a particularly embarrassing debate on May 1, 1644, when it was pointed out to the Presbyterians that Aquila was a "church gatherer".¹⁵ But it was retorted that parish churches are better than gathered churches, because "they that dwell together, being bound to all kind of moral duties one to another, have thereby the better opportunity to discharge the same."¹⁶ Presbyterian theory, then, was based more on a foundation of social justice than the Independents' whose entire scheme hinged upon the purity of the Church picturing the hidden reality of the Holy Catholic Church Invisible.

Nothing had really been resolved concerning the question a year later when Richard Vines brought in a compromise proposal which was debated, but not adopted.¹⁷ The following day, Dr. Gouge observed that only a heretic or a schismatic would demand the right to gather churches.¹⁸ The disagreement continued. On April 28, 1645, there was a discussion about people going from one church to another of their own volition. In this debate, Charles Herle, the Presbyterian spoke favorably of the Independent point of view.¹⁹ But in spite of all the vituperation, nothing was ever decided on the question of gathering churches. Presbyterian impatience finally showed itself by their requesting the Independents to bring in a report embodying their views on the subject.²⁰

It is not difficult to appreciate the feelings of the Presbyterian clergy when many of their flocks were being drawn off and formed into the newly gathered churches of the multitude of sectaries and Independents who flocked to London during the 1640's. And the more worried the orthodox clergy became, the more opportunity

they gave the Independents to build churches.

Presbyterians complained that the Independents take "our fattest sheep from us", viz. those with money.²¹ The charge was that the Independents took the spiritual cream off the parish churches: "If you gather but the choicest Members that should help the rest, and then complain of Parishes, when you have marr'd them, you do not justly."²² There were few Presbyterians more outspoken than Richard Baxter in condemning Independents for gathering churches:

The Judgments of all wise and sober men must needs disallow both the Practice of Division and unwarrantable Separation from the Churches of Christ, and the common Liberty for Gathering Churches out of Churches now pleaded for, and too much practiced by many;²³

The practice of taking members out of parish churches and forming them into gathered churches was universally considered by the Presbyterians as an "ecclesiastical felony."²⁴

SECTION F: THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, VISIBLE OR INVISIBLE?

A proper definition of the catholic church invisible and mystical was almost universally agreed upon by the various Puritan parties,²⁵ but the great difficulty arose when a definition of the visible church was attempted.²⁶ Presbyterians said that there is a universal catholic visible church as well as a universal catholic invisible church

wee...conceive that the visible Church described in the holy Scripture, is not only a parochiall or a particular Church, but that there is also a Nationall and Universall Church, dispersed through a whole kingdome, yea through the whole world; which doth in Ecclesiastical communion make up one body Catholike.²⁷

But Independents recognised no catholic church except the mystical invisible:

the Church instituted since Christ exhibited, is not one catholick Church, so as all the faithfull throughout the world should be joyned together in one and the same outward bond among themselves, and should depend upon one and the same visible pastor, or company of pastors, but there are so many

churches as there are companies, or particular Congregations, of those that profess the Faith, who are joyned together by a speciall band for the constant exercise of the communion of Saints.²⁸

In the Presbyterian Right as well as the Independent Center, the Puritan emphasis always centered on the visible church as opposed to the mystical.²⁹

None saw more clearly than Thomas Goodwin, the importance of finding an adequate statement about the visible church, whether catholic or particular. In fact, Goodwin saw this difference as one of the most basic issues in dispute;

here lies the difference between us and our Brethren, that they would make the communion which is between all the Saints, and all the Churches in the World, to be as truly political, the lesser being subject to the greater, in the Church Universal, or in a Nation, as it is in a particular Congregation, as we would;³⁰

The Presbyterians, said Goodwin, relegate the fellowship of churches to a position of "political" ties, when it ought to be a mystical experience. There ought not to be a universal visible political church, but every particular church should picture the mystical reality of the invisible body of Christ: "there is like Reason for the Universal Mystical Church, and particular Churches; and...every particular Church hath the Resemblance, Name, Priviledges, and Attributes of the general."³¹ The universal invisible church is wholly a matter of God's decree, whereas particular churches are to be entrusted to man's care.³² These latter churches operate under "all the Rules and Laws" of the former, and are not to be different in membership or organization.³³ Furthermore, the basic error of Presbyterianism is that it assumes that the only way this invisible catholic church can be pictured forth to the unregenerate world, is by a mixed multitude known as a catholic visible church³⁴ organized in "one politick Body."

with our own Amesius...we conceive that the notion [sic, notion?] or consideration of Church, which the Universal Body of Saints stands under, is meerly and purely Mystical, and such also to be the Union and Communion thereof, as with Christ, so of all the Members thereof among themselves.³⁵

Thomas Goodwin believed that the believer's union and communion with Christ was

generally agreed to be a mystical experience. Therefore, the communion of believers among themselves ought also to be mystical, not political. Only through such a concept could all thoughts of uniformity and persecution be laid to rest.

The idea of there being a universal visible church is open to serious criticisms, maintained Goodwin. First of all, there are not enough saints to comprise such a church. Such saints as there are, "are diffused over all the World, and thin Sown therein".³⁶ There are barely enough to make one small church (here and there in the earth).³⁷ God neither requires great numbers to accomplish His program, nor does He care much for statistics. Secondly, it is based on an inadequate view of the purpose of a church. Churches are primarily gathered together for worship and for fellowship together and with Christ. But a universal visible church could not meet for worship. "We assert, that untill the Mystical Body of the Elect shal meet together in Heaven, God hath appointed and ordained the visible Saints on Earth,...to be knit together in particular Bodies." Only in heaven is it going to be possible for a real "General Assembly" where the "Worship of God is perfected."³⁸ If there is a visible church universal (as the Presbyterians maintain), then what is its purpose? It cannot be for worship and it cannot be for fellowship. Although its representatives may meet together, this can hardly be called true fellowship of each believer with the rest of his brethren throughout the world.³⁹ To assume that there can be Christian fellowship by proxy (i.e. through representatives) is a cheapening of what Christ intended. And finally, to champion the doctrine of a catholic visible church is no better than popery:

That which is the principle and foundation of Popery; and which if it prevail'd, and all the Churches challenge the right of it, would hinder further Reformation and Growth in the Truth; and would make all the Reformed Churches Schismatics, and would justifie Nonresidency, and introduce a Foreign Ecclesiastical Government, in all States and Kingdoms, that cannot be Christ's Government: But such is the Catholick Political Church.⁴⁰

SECTION G: CHURCH COVENANTS AND THE CONTROVERSY

The idea of establishing churches on the basis of a covenant between members of particular churches and between those members and God had a rather long history before the middle of the seventeenth century.⁴¹ But in the seventeenth century, the matter of church covenants became one of the distinguishing marks of the Independents, many of whom said that without a church covenant, there was not a properly instituted church:

Believers doe not make a particular Church, although peradventure many may meete and live together in the same place, unlesse they be joyned together by a speciall bond among themselves:...this bond is a Covenant, either expresse or implicit, whereby believers doe particularly bind themselves, to performe all those duties, both toward God and one toward another, which pertaine to the respect and edification of the Church.⁴²

Because the church covenant became one of the most important aspects of Congregational polity, it must also be said that nothing embarrassed Independents quite so much as trying to prove their practice from the New Testament. One of the most telling arguments brought against the Presbyterians was that they resorted too much on the Old Testament for their church government. And it might have been expected that Independents would therefore confine their platform for government to the pages of the New Testament choosing rather to formulate some theory of dispensational exegesis. But these hopes were dashed when Independents began to prove their institution of church covenants from the Old Testament. The dilemma is seen in Henry Burton's uneasiness:

Now if any require an example hereof in the New Testament, I answer, what needs it, when wee have it in the Old? What example have we in the New Testament for baptizing of Infants? ...Again, what example, yea or precept is there of giving women the Lords Supper in the New Testament?⁴³

An argument from analogy such as this was not likely to escape the notice of Presbyterian apologists anxious to point out any kind of logical error. Thomas Goodwin found himself in a predicament when John Goodwin wrote him a letter saying that "the necessity of your covenant, ...you will never be able to demonstrate or prove from the Scriptures, to any sober-minded and considering Man." ⁴⁴

John Goodwin objected to a doctrinal covenant as a basis for church membership, referring to it as "a meer Human Invention" not of God's doing.⁴⁵ His strongest argument was that church covenants were not found in the New Testament:

Neither here can you have recourse to those Covenants in the Old Testament, to pattern yours withal: for then you fly to a Sanctuary which your selves have polluted, by destroying all Sympathy and Agreement between a National Church, and that which you call instituted or particular. And besides, to forsake the Guidance of the Spirit of God under the New Testament, to seek to make out our Thoughts by the Old, is to ask the Twilight in the Evening, whether it were light at Noon-day.⁴⁶

The answer Thomas Goodwin sent over was highly unsatisfactory and one suspects that John Goodwin had struck the Achilles' heel of the covenant champions. Thomas accused John of not really understanding the way the covenant was used in the Independent churches in Holland,⁴⁷ but does not state exactly what the true facts were. His only defense is to say that

We affirm with all Orthodox Divines, that all the moral Equity of these Covenants, do still hold under the New Testament as much as ever, as all things that were moral under the Covenant also do, as a seventh-day-Sabbath, Infant Baptism, etc.⁴⁸

John Goodwin had asked for chapter and verse proofs and Thomas only appealed to the examples under the Law and the covenant at Horeb.⁴⁹

In the Presbyterian-Independent controversy, however, the issue of church covenants was not nearly so important as might be expected, considering how crucial the covenants were to Independent polity.⁵⁰ Here and there, isolated individuals spoke out against them, such as Edwards and even Samuel Rutherford.

we hold that such a Church-covenant is a conceit destitute of all authority of Gods Word, Old or New Testament, and therefore to be rejected as a way of mens devising.⁵¹

It is a "binding of the Conscience where God hath not bound it", and anyway, "members were not entred into the Apostolick Church by such a Covenant."⁵² But many (if not most) of the moderate Presbyterians were willing to grant the use of church covenants. Richard Baxter wrote that "Here is no Difference at all between the Learned of each Party, that I am able to discover."⁵³ John Dury agreed with him,⁵⁴

as did the reformed writer Apollonius:

The Reformed Churches judge it necessary to the constitution of a particular visible Church, that there be sacred union in the exercise of Ecclesiasticall communion, expressed by certaine externall acts appointed by God, and to be exercised in a visible Church society, under one ministry, and spirituall discipline.

in this union there is...a kind of tacit and virtuall Covenant, which uniteth the faithful into a particular Church: although such a solemne Covenant betweene them in expresse termes be not publiely entered into before the whole Church.

Neither do we hold that the Covenant mentioned [i.e. by the Independents], is for the matter of it altogether unlawfull.⁵⁵

SECTION H: EVANGELISM IN REFERENCE TO THE CONCEPT OF THE CHURCH

Puritans did not promulgate an esoteric faith. They believed that there was a hell to shun and a heaven to gain for every man. And the only way that men could gain the latter and escape the former was through a personal experience of salvation wrought in their hearts by the Holy Spirit operating through, in and by the Holy Scriptures.⁵⁶ The message of the gospel, however, is known to the world by means of the act of preaching and few Christian eras elevated the sermon higher than did the sixteenth and seventeenth century Puritans. But it is not so much with preaching per se that we are concerned. It is rather hearing of sermons and of audiences more than preachers.

The problems of National Churches and of gathered churches have already been discussed. But perhaps the most important consideration in these discussions has been omitted. It was the matter of evangelism. Both Puritan parties saw that the primary need of the hour was to proclaim the message of Christ to a lost and dying world. Baxter was not the only one to "preach as a dying man to dying men." Any Puritan of the age worthy of the name would have said and done the same.

In an intricate way, the Presbyterian-Independent controversy was concerned with the preaching of the Word. Both systems of church government were based on

different views of evangelism. Presbyterians believed that lost and dying sinners should be admitted into the church in order to be evangelized; Independents believed that sinners should not be admitted as members of the church, because the church should picture forth to the world a facsimile of the mystical body of Christ. To them, a visible body of believers (holy and separated) was in itself a kind of warning and testimony to the lost. "The Congregational way," said Du Moulin, "was that which God made use of, in the Ancient Church, to convert to the faith, those, who were not Christians, but by outward profession, from a State of nature to a State of Grace."⁵⁷ Presbyterians, however, felt that Congregationalists kept people out of churches and away from the preaching of the Word, which amounted to a charge of being unevangelistic. Robert Baillie said that Independency "marrs the conversion of Pagans to the Christian Religion."⁵⁸ In fact, said he, "of all that ever crossed the American Seas, they are noted as most neglectfull of the work of Conversion."⁵⁹ A more serious accusation could hardly be imagined.⁶⁰

In reference to the Presbyterian-Independent struggles, the great need seemed to be the subordinating of arguments over church government to the more pressing issue of evangelization. It was here that Richard Baxter alleged Presbyterians (as well as Independents) were most guilty:

Most men do lay so great a part of reformation in the private opinions or singular ways. The Prelatical party think that the true reformation is to restore them to power, The Presbyterians have thought, that if Prelacy and Independency were well down, and the Classes up, the work were much done. And the Independents have thought that if they had gathered a separated body of godly people under covenant, much of the reformation were wrought; and Anabaptists have thought that if they could but get people to be baptised again, they had done a great matter for reformation. I am not now reproving any of these in matter, but that they lay so much upon their several orders and formalities as many of them do. When, indeed, if we had the rightest form of government in the world, it is the painful (i.e. painstaking) execution and the diligent and prudent use of means for men's conversion and edification, by able faithful men, that must accomplish the reformation.⁶¹

The great business at hand was saving souls, not the setting up of any particular form of ecclesiastical government. Some Puritans had forgotten that central truth.

But this could not be said of Thomas Goodwin. To him, ecclesiastical government should not impede the really important work of preaching the gospel. If the Presbyterians wanted a National church, then they should reform the nation, because "such National Assemblies in a due proportion, should rather have work suited to their constitution, viz. National Reformation."⁶² If the Presbyterian establishment did not facilitate evangelism, then it was no use, worse than worthless. On April 22, 1642, Goodwin preached before Parliament, telling them that "Gods first and chiefe care was to build up his Church mysticall, to make men Saints."⁶³ Evangelism must come first, "Matters of Order and Government" were secondary considerations.⁶⁴

The unfounded charge that Independents were unevangelical can possibly be due to a misunderstanding of their doctrine of the gathered church. Presbyterians suspected that unless there were a national church open to all the people in a realm, then there was likely to be many who would not be eligible to come under the hearing of gospel and so be converted. Baillie asked:

What have they to do with those that are without? Their pastors preach not for conversion, their relation is to their Flock, who are Church-members, converted already to their hand by the labours of other men, before they can be admitted into their Church.⁶⁵

Independents were aware of this weakness in their gathered church concept and they were careful to alleviate it whenever possible. In their Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, 1658, they defined the duties of pastors very clearly in this regard:

they who are ingaged in the work of Publique Preaching....are not...obliged to dispense the Seals [i.e. Sacraments] to any other then such as...they stand related to, as Pastors or Teachers; yet ought they not to neglect others living within their Parochial Bounds, but besides their constant publique Preaching to them, they ought to enquire after their profiting by the Word, instructing them in, and pressing upon them (whether young or old) the great Doctrines of the Gospel, even personally and particularly, so far as their strength and time will admit.⁶⁶

Though the membership of particular churches should be confined to those truly

regenerate, yet that does not mean that others are not supposed to come and listen to the preaching of the Word. Far from it:

though wee willingly admit all commers to the hearing of the Word with us (as the Corinthians admitted Infidels, I Cor.14.24. 25) yet wee receive none as members into the Church, but such as (According to the judgement of charitable Christians) may be conceived to be received of God into fellowship with Christ, the head of the Church.⁶⁷

The tension between a national church where none were excluded and a gathered church where the unregenerate were not allowed showed itself in the thinking of Thomas Goodwin whose influence we can see in the Savoy Declaration statement given supra. If the minister is not responsible for those souls outside his particular gathered church, then there can be no evangelism. But if the minister is responsible for souls outside his church, then how can a national establishment be denied? In solving this dilemma, Goodwin steered perilously near to the Presbyterian viewpoint. "Ministers," he asserted, "are in a true and proper Sense, and for some ends Ministers to them without, as well as to them within."⁶⁸ To deny this is to espouse Brownism. But there are limits to this ministerial responsibility:

They preach as Ministers to them without (whether they acknowledge them or not) as well as to their own Flock... And tho' they have not that obligation for watching, or power to Censure, Admonish, etc. yet as to Preaching, which is an Ordinance of Conversion, they have.⁶⁹

Goodwin wanted to leave the door open for evangelism without going completely over to the Presbyterian concept of ministers being ministers to the church universal. But evangelism was not the only end of preaching. Those saints within the church must be edified. Hence "a means of growth unto them that are within" needs to be provided.⁷⁰ Edification, however, must not be overemphasized (even though the principal purposes of a church are fellowship and worship.) . There must be a proper balance between edification of the saints and conversion of the unregenerate. The ministry "serves to conversion more then building up; and the Gifts are more on Wicked Men, than to build up Godly Men."⁷¹ But "a right constitution of the churches and of the Ordinances and Officers thereof," is primarily for the edification

of the saints.⁷² Thus, a properly constituted church as well as a godly and well trained ministry can together build up the saints and convert the sinner.

Goodwin's mediating position about ministering to church members as well as to non-members was undoubtedly a strong factor in his acceptance, under Cromwell, of various preferments. It can also account for his willingness to accept public funds for his ministerial duties. He felt that he was really a minister to those without as well as to those within:

If I were seated in a Parish that had a Church init gathered out of it, and the rest of the Parish came to hear me, I should not look upon myself to preach as a private man to all these that are not in my Church, and as a Minister only to them that are of the Church, but as one set apart to the work of the Ministry: to preach as a Minister to both, as to the matter of preaching: ...which is Conversion, as well as for the edifying of the body of Christ.⁷³

SUMMARY

Section E: The opposite of a National Church concept is the gathered church idea of saints being formed into special groups apart from the world of the ungodly. It was this idea, fostered by Puritan Independents, which specifically infuriated the Presbyterians, who considered such practice an "ecclesiastical felony". It meant building churches at the expense of other churches, of separating brethren from brethren. Although hotly aired in the Westminster Assembly, the problem was never resolved, even though the Independent leaders once signed an agreement not to gather churches.

Section F: Another source of disagreement in the matter of the church was whether or not there ought to be a universal visible church. Presbyterians affirmed it. Congregationalists denied it. The former contended that all fellowship among churches would be endangered if the latter were right, but Congregationalists only retorted that such an idea was papistical and unworthy of Protestants.

Section G: Church covenants between members of particular churches was one of the earmarks of seventeenth century Congregationalism. They were an intricate part of the Congregational ecclesiological concept and figured to some degree in the Presbyterian-Independent controversy because the Synodical men often denied their use.

Section H: In the matter of Evangelism, we have a significant illustration of how the two differing concepts of church government worked [i.e. national vs. gathered]. Presbyterians would church the unconverted in order to preach to them. Congregationalists would keep them unchurched as a warning for them to repent. Both parties would evangelize.

¹ It is possible that there were some unorthodox Independents, who gathered churches and who did not wholeheartedly adhere to regenerate church membership. E.g. Thomas Goodwin wrote to John Goodwin and accused him of holding a view which was not truly regenerate membership. Vide Thomas Goodwin, Works (1696 ed.), p. 44, IV, correspondence appended to the volume. Robert Baillie tells us that John practised church gathering. Vide David Laing (ed.), The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, 1841), p. III, II. Cf. S.W. Carruthers, The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly (Philadelphia: published by the Presbyterian Historical Society of England and America, 1943), p. 92, who discusses how John Goodwin's church gathering affected the Westminster Assembly.

² The question of the purpose of a visible church was one of the key pivotal points in the controversy. Thomas Goodwin said that "the intent of the Presbyterial Government, is professed to be, to preserve Order in the Church." Vide his of the Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ (Works, 1696 ed.), p. 189, IV. Gillespie, e.g., in his An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland, etc. (Edinburgh: 1641), p. 3. The Independents said, therefore, that Presbyterians had an inadequate purpose of a church. Thomas Goodwin wrote, "one end of a church is, that a Man therein may enjoy further fellowship and more ways of communion than out of it." "Another end of communion of Saints, in a particular Church, is to edifie one another in Faith and Love, which is the end of All gifts, Ordinances, and of the Institution of a Church it self." Vide Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 255. To Goodwin, Presbyterians tended to make discipline the primary end of a church when it should not be: "the main end of a Church [is] ... Worship and.... Discipline [is only] ... the Appendix thereunto, to keep the Worship pure." (Ibid., p. 117). Cf. James Moffatt, The Golden Book of John Owen; etc. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), p. 109. It would appear that Berndt Gustafsson, in his The Five Dissenting Brethren; etc. (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1955), p. 48, is incorrect in his assessment that the Apologists (i.e. Thomas Goodwin et. al.) held evangelism to be the essential objective, "nor did the church have any essential function except this one." Many Puritans held that evangelism should take place in the home and the church should be reserved primarily for worship.

³ John Cook, What the Independents Would have, etc. (London: 1647), p. 7. Cf. Thomas Hooker, A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline. etc. (London: 1648), p. 13, Part I.

⁴ John Lightfoot, The Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines; etc. (Works, vol. XIII, ed. by John Rogers Pitman, London: 1824), p. 52.

⁵ Ibid., p. 56, Nov. 20, 1643.

⁶ Ibid., p. 92. Cf. Alexander F. Mitchell, The Westminster Assembly (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1883), p. 193, for a short discussion of this event. There seems to be an allusion to this in Thomas Goodwin's Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 113, who quotes from Bain's Diocesan tryal, p. 66, "It is a more Apostolical Work to beget, and to plant, and to multiply, than to Govern Men being converted. That those that should be fit to gather a Church, and to bring it to fulness from small beginnings, should not be fit to govern it, and to reap the fruit of it, but that the power should be in others that are extrinsecal to their congregations, is absurd to think." Goodwin evidently felt that the Presbyterians were wishing to capitalize

on the Independents' success in building churches. It was a very high-handed thing for the Assembly divines to ask the Independents to relinquish their churches.

⁷ Thomas Edwards, Antapologia: Or a Full Answer to the Apologeticall Narration of Mr. Goodwin, et. al. (London: 1646), p.5.

⁸ It has been said that Thomas Goodwin gathered a church in St. Dunstan's in the East when he returned from Holland in 1640, but this has been doubted by some historians. Vide e.g. F.J. Powicke (ed.), Essays Congregational and Catholic (1931), p.289n. In the Narration, the brethren stated that they had not gathered a party to themselves since returning. From various sources, we should rather think that Thomas Goodwin had a certain nucleus of people who seemed to follow him around whenever he moved. This loyal following evidently came with him from Holland and comprised his church in London. Therefore, it could hardly be said that he had "gathered" them out of the parishioners in the area.

⁹ Certain Considerations to Dis-swade Men from Further Gathering of Churches in this present juncture of Time. Subscribed by diverse Divines of the Assembly, here-after mentioned (London: 1644?), proposition number "5", p.3, *Italics mine.*

¹⁰ That Presbyterians were not universally happy with this document is evident from Robert Baillie's fears, "I truly wish it had never been moved, for I expect more evil to our cause from it than good," Letters and Journals, op. cit., p.121, II. Cf. Carruthers, Everyday Work, op. cit., p.93, for a further discussion. Evidently, Presbyterians felt that the document had given too much to the Independents.

¹¹ This agreement has not received the attention it deserves by historians anxious to date the Apologetical Narration, and to determine the occasion of its publication. The failure of Presbyterians to live up to their side of the bargain could very well be one of the missing links relating to the issuing of the famous Narration. Vide infra.

¹² Cf. Mitchell, Westminster Assembly, op. cit., p.193.

¹³ Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.257.

¹⁴ Vide Lightfoot, Journal op, cit., p.224. In one of his arguments against Presbyterianism, Thomas Goodwin reasons that subordinated synods are really "gathered churches", because each higher assembly is formed of representatives gathered (or chosen) from the lower assemblies. And since Presbyterians held that each presbytery, synod, or national assembly was really a "church", then their whole system must be a scheme of "gathered churches". Vide his Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.396.

¹⁵ Recorded by George Gillespie, Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster, etc. (ed. by David Meek, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846), p.57.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.57, May 2, 1644, Cf. Lightfoot, Journal, op. cit., p.259, for the same debate.

¹⁷ Vide Alexander F. Mitchell et John Struthers (eds.), Minutes of the Sessions

of the Westminster Assembly of Divines etc. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), p.83, Sess.421, April 21, 1645 although the minutes are very skimpy concerning the subject.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.84, Sess. 422, April 22, 1645. Gouge and many other Presbyterians misunderstood the Independent doctrine of gathered churches. Cf. Henry Burton, A Vindication of Churches, commonly called Independent: etc. (London: 1644), p.26.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.86, Sess.426.

²⁰ Ibid., p.132, Sept. 22, 1645, Sess.506. It was not to their credit that Presbyterians at the same time as they were denying Independents the right to gather churches, were also endeavoring to keep them out of any livings that might turn up. E.g. Sidrach Simpson (one of the Assembly Independents), was recommended to be afternoon preacher at Somerset House, on Jan. 13, 1646/7, but the Assembly referred it to a committee and delayed the transaction by a long period of red tape. Carruthers thinks that it was primarily because they did not want to appoint an Independent. Vide Everyday Work, op. cit., p.183.

²¹ Ephraim Pagitt, Heresiography, Or a Discription of the Hereticks and Sectaries Sprang up in these latter times. etc. (fourth edition, London, 1647), p.84. This was a common complaint by the Presbyterians. John Paget was perturbed in the early 1630's when John Davenport came from England to Holland and not only refused to be co-pastor of his church, but took off "the most & choicest of the congregation." Vide Raymond Phineas Stearns, Congregationalism in the Dutch Netherlands (Chicago: published by the American Society of Church History, 1940), p.67.

²² Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, App. III, pp.59, 62, 63, as cited in Nuttall, Visible Saints, op. cit., p.109. Dr. Nuttall gives one instance of a Presbyterian reversing the procedure and wooing two members away from an Independent (ibid., p.128). What would Baxter have said of this?

²³ Richard Baxter, Church Concord: etc. p.1, Part I. Baxter lists 20 ill effects of "private" or "gathered churches". Cf. Chap. XII, number "10", p.42ff. This book of Baxter's has a list of ten major differences between Presbyterians and Independents in Part I. pp.15-42, and is well worth studying for its bearing on present-day denominational problems. The only concession which Baxter was willing to give the Independents in this regard was a right to gather churches subject to the approval of the local synod: vide Reliquiae Baxterianae, op. cit., pp.189,191, Lib. I, Part II, in a letter to Philip Nye. Thomas Goodwin, in his Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.390, said that the sub-committee of divines in the Assembly was willing to grant Independents the liberty to worship, but not to gather churches. This amounted to a recognition of the status quo, but not of the right to expand. Both Goodwin and Baxter saw the cruciality of this matter. Baxter once, had a word of commendation for Jeremiah Burroughs (one of the Westminster Assembly Independents) because he supposedly "never practised their Church-gathering way". Vide Reliquiae Baxterianae: or Mr. Richard Baxter's Narrative of His Life and Times (published by Matthew Sylvester, London: 1696), p.103, Part I. Lib.I. Burroughes, in his Irenicum, To The Lovers of Truth and Peace etc. (London: 1646), p.162, defends the right to gather churches by quoting the great Voetius, Professor of Utrecht, and by giving several reasons for allowing the practice. In Baxter's thinking, as in many moderns', the principal thing wrong with the doctrine of gathered churches was that it meant separa-

tion of believers from other believers and of one church from another church. He granted a "lawful" separation from "infidels" or from "the World", but not from other Christians unless the latter proved to be in false churches: vide Church Concord, op. cit., p.43. Cf. p.390ff, Chap. XII, Book VII, "Of the lawfulness of Gathering Churches out of other Churches. Now if rightly stated it is not a Separation...", in Thomas Goodwin's Constitution of Churches, op. cit. Two modern writers on this subject are Albert Peel, Inevitable Congregationalism (London: Independent Press Ltd., 1937), p.64; et Norman Goodall, Congregationalism Plus (London: 1953), p.58.

24

Thomas Fuller, The Church History of Britain, From the Birth of Jesus Christ Until the Year MCCXLVIII (London ed.: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1837), p.465, III. A church guilty of stealing members from other churches could only be accused of schism and separation. Cf. Hetherington, op. cit., p.189. Independent success, according to Fuller, was due to the fact that "a new inn never wanteth guests at first setting up, especially if hanging out a fair sign, and promising more cleanness and neatness that is in any of their neighbors" (loc. cit.).

25

Cf. the Westminster Confession of Faith definition in S. W. Carruthers, The Westminster Confession of Faith (Manchester: R. Aikman and Son, 1937), p.139, Chap. XXV, sect. I, "The Catholic or universal Church which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect...gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof;" et Thomas Goodwin, Of the Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ. (1696 ed.), p.249, Works, vol. IV: "the Mystical Church, is the Assembly of all Saints, it is the whole Family both in Heaven and Earth, Ephes. 3.15. which, like the Sea, is too vast in this World, to be gathered into one place."

26

Puritanism inherited an unfinished task from the first reformers. Peter R. McKenzie, in a recent thesis presented to New College, University of Edinburgh, 1952, entitled, "The Invisibility of the Church For Luther and Calvin," has shown that "as Calvin's thought developed, the emphasis moved from the side of the invisibility to that of visibility, and at the same time the tension between the two sides was accentuated... Calvin's interest was more and more the restoration of the true form of the church" (p.162). The completion of this movement in Calvin's thought was left for seventeenth century successors. Thomas Goodwin spoke of the matter of a visible church being "the main occasion of all Errors about Ecclesiastical Government, Men not discerning what was the Church which Christ intended:" vide his Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.241. For the debates in the Westminster Assembly over the question of a general visible church, vide George Gillespie, Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster. etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846), p.46, March 28th, 1644; et Alexander F. Mitchell et John Struthers (eds.), Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines etc. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), p.191, Sess. 594, Feb.26, 1645.

27

Apollonius, op. cit., p.25. Cf. Samuel Hudson, The Essence and Unitie of the Church Catholike Visible, and the Prioritie thereof in regard of Particular Churches Discussed. (London: 1645), p.4. Thomas Goodwin, in his Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.1, paraphrases the Presbyterian doctrine. One naturally might ask the reason why Presbyterians insisted on the idea of a universal catholic church and several answers might be given. One of these answers is that Presbyterians felt that Independency (with its denial of the Catholic visible church) would undermine the future victory of the militant Church. Adam Steuart is a case in point. Vide his Some Observations and Annotations Upon the Apologeticall Narration, etc. (London: 1643), epistle "To

the Right Reverend, and Learned Divines, The Authors of The Apologeticall Narration", unpagued. The Presbyterian concept of the church militant should not be underestimated in evaluating their idea of the church universal and visible. A curious feature which appears again and again in Presbyterian apologetic of the time is the quotation of Canticles 6:10 to prove the doctrine militant. E.g. Alexander Henderson, in his The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh: 1691 ed., but originally published in 1641), p. 51; George Gillespie, An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland, in the points of Ruling-Elders, and of the Authority of Presbyteries and Synods (Edinburgh: 1641), "To the Reader", unpagued; et John Arrowsmith, A Great Wonder in Heaven: or a lively Picture of the Militant Church, Drawn by a divine Pencil. Revel. 12.12. Discovered on in a Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at Margarets Westminster, on the last Monethly Fast-day, January 27, 1646/7, (London: 1647), p.1.

²⁸ William Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the holy Scriptures, and the Interpreters thereof, and brought into Method. (London: n.d.), p.178. Cf. Henry Jacob, An attestation of many Learned, Godly, & famous Divines, Lightes of Religion, and pillars of the Gospell, iustifying this doctrine, viz. That the church-government ought to bee always with the peoples free consent. etc. (n.p.: 1613), p.191; Thomas Hooker, A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline. etc. (London: 1648), p.253, Part I.

²⁹ Vide A.F. Scott Pearson, Church and State: Political Aspects of Sixteenth Century Puritanism (Cambridge: University Press, 1928), p.116. The disagreement between them occurred over the relationship between the visible and invisible church. J.S. Griffith, writing in the Congregational Quarterly, vol. XII: no. 4 (Oct., 1934), p.411, has rightly said that "The relation of the Church Visible to the Church Invisible is a trouble that has vexed the centuries." His article is entitled "The Church Visible and Invisible."

³⁰ Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.223.

³¹Ibid., p.248. ³²Ibid., p.5. ³³Ibid., p.3. ³⁴Ibid., p.205. ³⁵Ibid., p.3.

³⁶ Loc. cit.

³⁷ Loc. cit. Pessimism about the number of the elect could be defended as the governing force moving much of Thomas Goodwin's ecclesiastical thinking.

³⁸ Ibid., p.152.

³⁹ Ibid., pp.42, 43.

⁴⁰ One of Goodwin's main arguments against the visible catholic church was that it resembled the Roman Catholic teaching of the same subject. A Presbyterian government, said Goodwin, "would make the Clergy, the Catholick Church in the Creed; for to tell the Church, if it be a politick Body, is to tell those Elders which Represent the whole" (Ibid., p.157). Although Goodwin had misjudged true Presbyterianism by saying that all of the elders were clergy when most of them were laymen, yet he had illustrated the strongest principle of Congregationalism...i.e. that the "people" are the church and no one else can usurp their prerogatives and authority.

⁴¹ Cf. Dwight Chichester Smith, "Robert Browne (1550?-1633) as Churchman and

Theologian," unpublished Ph. D. thesis at New College, University of Edinburgh, 1936, p. 341ff. for Browne's conception of the covenanted people. Several writers have traced church covenants back to the 16th century anabaptists. Vide e.g. Rufus M. Jones, *Mysticism and Democracy in the English Commonwealth* (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1932) p. 39; A.S.P. Woodhouse *Puritanism and Liberty* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Limited, 1950), p. 72; Franklin H. Littell, "The Anabaptist Concept of the Church" an essay from *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1958), p. 121. Whatever the origin, Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (tr. by Olive Wyon, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1931), p. 221, is almost certainly right when he states that "the idea of a Church covenant is not Calvinistic in origin." Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Visible Saints* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 6, has called attention to the fact that Poullain's church at Frankfort, almost had a church covenant, because he required every member to subscribe to a confession of faith he had prepared.

⁴² William Ames, *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the holy Scriptures, and brought into Method* (London: n.d.), pp. 140, 141. One of Ames's most outstanding contemporaries on the Continent was Gisbert Voetius (1589-1676), the famed Dutch theologian, whom Robert Baillie expected to write against the Independents (vide supra), but who thwarted all such attempts. Douglas Nobbs, *Theocracy and Toleration* (Cambridge: University Press, 1938), p. 158, says of Voetius: "It was of the greatest importance that a Calvinist theologian of the reputation of Voetius should have emphasized so strongly the covenant as the essential characteristic of the visible church." This is one strong reason why Voetius stood so close to the Independents and perplexed the Scottish Presbyterians. Other writers on the subject are Thomas Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline*, etc. (London: 1648), 68ff., Part I. Chap. VII, "An Answer to Arguments made against the Church covenant"; *An Answer of the Severall Churches in New England unto Nine Positions, Sent Over to Them (By divers Reverend and godly Ministers in England) to declare their Judgements therein*, etc. (London: 1643, appended to the answer to thirty two questions), which is all about church covenants; J. Max Patrick, *Hugh Peters, A Study in Puritanism* (The University of Buffalo Studies: Published under the direction of the Committee on Publications of the Roswell Park Publication Fund), Vol. 17: no. 4 (March, 1946), p. 195ff., Chap. 14, "Church Covenants"; et Allan Simpson, *Puritanism in Old and New England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 19-38, Chap. 2, "The Covenanted Community."

⁴³ Henry Burton, *A Vindication of Churches, commonly called Independent: etc.* (London: 1644), p. 28.

⁴⁴ *Two Letters Which passed between the Reverend Mr. John Goodwin and Author, concerning a Church-Covenant*, bound in Vol. IV, *Works* (1696 ed.), p. 38.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 39. ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 41. ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁴⁹ *Loc. cit.* In his whole defense, Thomas Goodwin gives not one New Testament proof for his practice. This failure of Goodwin to answer the question as it was put to him was noticed by Thomas Edwards, in his *Antapologia: Or A Full Answer to the Apologeticall Narration of Mr. Goodwin, et al* (London: 1646), p. 67, who rebukes Thomas Goodwin for delaying so long to answer John Goodwin's criticism. Edwards also quotes John Goodwin's letter against Thomas in his *The Casting downe*

of the last stronghold of Satan. or a Treastise against Toleration and pretended Liberty of Conscience: etc. (London: 1647), p.120. The only surprising thing is to find Edwards agreeing with John Goodwin in anything. The latter was one of the decade's most vociferous exponents of religious liberty and toleration!

50

It is well to remark that we have not found a single instance where the subject of church covenants was ever mentioned or debated in the discussions at the Westminster Assembly where so many minute points of polity were thrashed out during those long years of theological wrangling. None of the four great primary documents have anything to say on the subject. George Gillespie's Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster. etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846); John Lightfoot, The Journal of the Proceedings of The Assembly of Divines: etc. (Works, vol. XIII, ed. John Rogers Pitman, London: 1824); Alexander F. Mitchell et John Struthers (eds.), Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines etc. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874); et David Laing (ed.), The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, 1841), these four are all significantly silent about the subject ever coming before the Assembly.

⁵¹ Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries or, A Peaceable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland (London: 1644), p.88. Richard Baxter, in his Church Concord: etc. (London: 1691), p.19, has a quotation purporting to show that Rutherford did not consider church covenants to be "unlawfull". But once again, it would appear that Baxter has oversimplified an issue and warped an author in order to facilitate his quest for unity.

52

Rutherford, Due Right, op. cit., p.89. Cf. John Goodwin's letter to Thomas Goodwin, op. cit., p.40. The question one has to ask in the case of any appeal by Rutherford to the example of the primitive church, however, is one of validity. Rutherford had already admitted that the polity of the primitive church was metamorphosed by centuries of development. Vide supra. Therefore, how could anything be proven by an argument like this?

53

Baxter, Church Concord, op. cit., p.19. This is at the beginning of Chap. IV, "Necessity of a Church Covenant". Baxter writes (p.21, ibid), "nature and the Scripture Presidents in the Old Testament, and the Doctrine of the Apostles, and ancient Practice of the Churches, do satisfie us of the usefulness of Holy Covenants, prudently, seasonably and seriously made." He also discusses the covenant in his "Treatise of Confirmation".

⁵⁴ Vide John Dury, A Epistolary Discourse... Written by Mr. John Dury to Mr. Tho. Goodwin, et al (London: 1644), p.36, who was willing to grant Independents their use of church covenants.

55

Guilielmus Apollonii, A Consideration of Certain Controversies at this time agitated in the Kingdome of England, Concerning the Government of the Church of God. etc. (London: 1645), pp.14,16. According to this writer, the Reformed Churches only denied that it "is absolutely necessary and essential to the constitution of a true visible Church, so that without such a Covenant there would be no visible Church of God, no member of a true or pure Church?" (p.17, ibid.). Apollonius's Chap.2, "Of a Church-Covenant" (p.13ff.) was answered by John Norton, in his Responsio ad Totam Quaestionum Syllogen a clarissimo Viro Domino Guilielmo Apollonio

Ecclesiae Middleburgensis Pastore, propositam. Ad componendas controversias quasdam circa Politiam Ecclesiasticam in Anglia nunc temporis agitatas spectantem. (Londini: 1648), p.20ff., Cap.II, "De foedere Ecclesiastico".

⁵⁶ The subject of the Holy Spirit in relation to the written Word was a perplexing one for Puritanism as a whole, but was not a divisive matter in the Presbyterian-Independent controversy. We must therefore pass it by.

⁵⁷ Lewis Du Moulin, The Conformity of the Discipline and Government of those who are commonly called Independents to that of the Ancient Primitive Christians. (London: 1680), p.26.

⁵⁸ Robert Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London: 1646), p.60.

⁵⁹ Loc. cit. John Bastwick also had a similar idea when he said that Independents work "onely for the advancement and fomenting of their faction", instead of for evangelism. Vide Baillie, op. cit., p.151, for this quotation. Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, in his recent book, Visible Saints (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p.161, implies an Independent lack of evangelistic fervor particularly in regard to missionary activity.

⁶⁰ This contention would be very difficult to prove. A good deal of the Independent impetus toward preaching without ordination (ie. lay preaching) came from a genuine desire to get the gospel out to as many as possible. Presbyterians, who guarded the right to preach with the sword of the magistrate, could not convincingly accuse others of lack of evangelistic fervor. Vide supra on lay preaching. Another answer to this untrue accusation is the fact of the Savoy Declaration of Faith having added a chapter (XX) to the Westminster Confession of Faith on the Subject of the Gospel. In many respects, Congregationalists were more interested in evangelism than their more orthodox rivals.

⁶¹ Richard Baxter, Gildas Salvianus: The Reformed Pastor (ed. by John T. Wilkinson, London: The Epworth Press, 1955), p.130. Several other specific examples could be cited where Presbyterians were not too interested in the salvation of souls. E.g. S.W. Carruthers, The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian Historical societies of England and America, 1943), p.79, gives an instance of Herbert Palmer coming into the Assembly with a report one day that "some of the City ministers [i.e. the Presbyterians] were preaching rather of other things than to bring men to repentance." Samuel Rutherford admitted in his Survey of Antichrist, p.261, that stamping out heresy by the magistrate was more important than "conversion of soules, or propagating the gospel", as cited by W.K. Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England 1640-1660 (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1938), p.296, III. Jordan says that the best Independents held that the church's primary job was to propagate the gospel, not to extirpate heresy as many of the Radical Presbyterians believed. Vide op. cit., p.444, III.

⁶² Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.200.

⁶³ Thomas Goodwin, Zerubbabels encouragement to finish the temple, as found in the Works (1861 ed.), p.110, XII.

⁶⁴ Loc. cit.

⁶⁵ Baillie, Dissuasive, op. cit., p.60. Cf. Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries or, A Peaceable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland (London: 1644), p.175.

⁶⁶ Albert Peel (ed.), The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, 1658 (London: Independent Press, 1939), p.71, Sect. XIV, of "Order". Not only did the Independents make provision for ministers to minister to those outside their church memberships, but some of the leaders of Independency had even gone farther still. In their Propositions for the Propagation of the Gospel, Owen, Goodwin, et al. suggested in 1652, that a law should be passed making attendance on preaching compulsory unless the conscience had specific reasons against it. Vide F.J. Powicke, "The Independents of 1652", Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society. Vol. IX (1924-1926), p.23f., proposition no. "II".

⁶⁷ John Cotton, The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England, etc. (London: 1645), p.56.

⁶⁸ Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.313.

⁶⁹Loc. cit. ⁷⁰Loc. cit. ⁷¹Ibid., p.255. ⁷²Loc. cit.

⁷³Ibid., p.379.

CHAPTER XIII

CONCEPT OF THE CHURCH (CONT.)

SECTION I: JUS DIVINUM REGIMINIS ECCLESIASTICI

"Expediency" was not the usual modus operandi in ecclesiastical affairs during the seventeenth century.¹ It was an era with a multitude of theories of "divine right", not all of which were confined to matters of religion. Rome, Geneva, and Canterbury may all have claimed authority jure divino² but they were certainly not the only ones to do so. The Erastians in the House of Commons (exemplified by William Pym) practically sponsored a jus divinum of Parliament; to the Levellers, it was a divine right of the people; to King Charles, it was a divine right of kings; to the Anglicans, a divine right of bishops; to the Scots, a divine right of Presbytery; and even Oliver Cromwell seemed to believe in a divine right of victory.

The fact of there being so many Puritan principles established jure divino can perhaps be traced back to their view of the inerrancy of Scripture and to the unity and power of truth. "Whatever faithful advice...hath the imprimatur of scripture upon it, comes armed with the authority of heaven" was their cry.³ Puritans

believed that the truth of God was all white. There were no blacks or even grays to mar its purity.

Errours fight among themselves; this indeed is one great difference between truth and errour, that truth though it be contrary to errour, yet one truth is never contrary to another, truth is one and uniforme; but many errours are not only contrary to truth, but to errours also.⁴

The concept of absolute truth lay at the basis of most Puritan thinking about divine right.⁵ Thus Rutherford could say that Presbyterians prayed for one thing and Independents for another; it was obvious that God could not answer both.⁶ Someone was certain to be disappointed. Contradictory prayers are not prompted by the same Spirit, because "the same Spirit doth not breathe contrary motions."⁷ And John Dury, for the same reason, said that the Parliament should not "authorize two different Wayes of Church Government in a State," because to do so would admit "of a seed of perpetuall Division within it selfe."⁸

All of the Presbyterians did not wish their ecclesiastical system to be established on a jus divinum basis,⁹ but those who did won the day.¹⁰ Thomas Cartwright had made ample room for such a turn of events:

The Discipline of Christs Church that is necessary for all times is delivered by Christ, and set downe in the holy Scriptures.¹¹

And when the London ministers looked in the scriptures, they found that the Presbyterian system was that discipline about which their predecessor had spoken.¹² One of the most naive statements about the divine right of Presbytery came from the pen of Robert Baillie. "Great wrestling have we for the erecting of our Presbyterie. It must be a divine thing to which so much resistance is made by men of all sorts."¹³

Since most historians have not failed to allude to, criticize, or commend the Presbyterian doctrine of jus divinum (depending on their respective prejudice,) it is superfluous for us to attempt any further treatment of it. But perhaps the fact that Independents also believed in ecclesiastical government jure divino has been slighted by some.¹⁴ That the problem of jus divinum was of vital importance to the Independ-

ents is evident from the fact that they wished to place it on the agenda for debate the first thing in the Westminster Assembly.¹⁵ And not only did they want to debate it first at the Assembly, but it is evident in their writings that many Independents had a deep appreciation for a polity established *jure divino*. It was the farthest thing from their minds to think of establishing a church government which did not have the stamp of jus divinum on it. The New England elders were asked by the Puritans in Old England whether or not they would allow any other polity besides their Congregational¹⁶ and they answered:

The Discipline appointed by Jesus Christ for his Churches is not arbitrary, that one Church may set up and practice one forme, and another forme, as each one shall please, but is one and the same for all Churches, and in all the Essentials and Substantials of it unchangable, and to be kept till the appearing of Jesus Christ. And if that Discipline which we here practice, be (as we are perswaded of it) the same which Christ hath appointed and therefore unalterable, we see not how another can be lawfull; and therefore if a company of people shall come hither, and here set up and practice another, we pray you thinke not much, if we can not promise to approve them in so doing.¹⁷

Independents on both sides of the Atlantic felt that theirs was a government of God's approval; they did not agree with the Erastians who denied all semblance of jus divinum. There was only one polity prescribed in holy Writ:

the Apostles themselves had no other libertie to doe any thing about the calling, planting, ordering, and regulating of Churches. but what they had immediately given them by Christ, and his Spirit.¹⁸

Independents, no less than Presbyterians, believed that the Bible contained a perfect rule of church government. This rule may prove difficult to find, but it must be sought nevertheless. Anything short of a Scriptural polity is only jus humanum:

wee cannot doubt but that Christ hath left an exact prescript forme of government in his Word, for the Church of the New Testament; so we ought diligently, in the use of all good meanes, to enquire after that good old way, and to finde as much of it as wee can, and to follow what we know.¹⁹

The difference between Presbyterians and Independents was not that one believed in a jus divinum polity and the other did not. It was rather that one was willing to admit

that his conception of the jus divinum might be faulty. There was still only one true discipline. The problem was to find it.²⁰ This was plainly the position of the Apologeticall Narration authors who said that

for all cases wherein we saw not a cleare resolution from Scripture, example, or direction, we stil professedly suspended, until God whould give us further light, not daring to eeke out what was defective in our light in matters Divine with humane prudence, (the fatall errour to Reformation) 21

There is no stronger refutation of Winthrop Hudson's contention viz. that Independents denied their polity to be jure divino, than the case of Thomas Goodwin. According to Goodwin,

if Christ hath not settled by his Institution the Order, Discipline and Government of his Churches, if he had not given Established Rules for Church Censures, Admonitions and Excommunication: If a certain Platform of Church-Government, had not been fixed by him, we should have no Warrant to endeavour a Reformation, when the Order and Discipline of the Churches of Christ is impaired, and almost lost. . . And without a Rule of Divine Institution, there could be no setting things right, when amiss.²²

Goodwin not only believed that there was a divinely given polity for all time, but he went even further than that. "That Church-power," he said "which cannot shew a set and constant Divine Rule...is not of God."²³ Christ did not establish a church government which changed from age to age according to human frailty, for it "is suitable to all Ages, times and places."²⁴ There is no necessity for modifications in different environments. Pragmatism and utilitarianism were not in Thomas Goodwin's repertoire of theological dogma. If any think that Church government should change from age to age, then "it lies upon those, that affirm it, to prove that...the government in apostolic churches...was an act of necessity, and not voluntary and as it should stand in all ages."²⁵ The polity of the New Testament is perfect and divinely established and should never be polluted with human accretions.

I Cor. 17.17. 'So I ordain in all the Churches; 'and that which will suit all Churches, all States, all Times, is certainly rather the Pattern than any other. Christ did not make one Form for Cities, and another for Villages; one Form for

times of Persecution and another Form for times of Peace; for what suited times of Persecution, would suit times of Peace also: And as the Laws of Men, consider what is best for the generality of Men, so the Institutions of Christ considered, what was best for his Church of the New Testament, throughout all Ages, and all conditions and places whatsoever.²⁶

Whatever this New Testament Polity, it is forever binding, fits every age, and such is the Congregational way.²⁷

SECTION J: SYNODS AND THE RELATION OF CHURCHES

One of the main points of difference between the Savoy Declaration of the Independents and the Westminster Confession of Faith was their different points of view concerning the use of synods.²⁸ This was one of the principal issues dividing the Presbyterians and Independents. Robert Baillie considered it one of the two greatest points in the entire controversy.²⁹

Although Independents disagreed with Presbyterians over many aspects of the use of synods, they did not repudiate entirely the use of such synods of churches.³⁰ In the main, they agreed with the statement of William Ames:

Yet Particular Churches, as their communion doth require, the light of nature and equity of rules and examples of Scripture doe teach, may and oftentimes also ought to enter into a mutual confederacy and fellowship among themselves in Classes, and Synods, that they may use their common consent and mutuall helpe as much as fitly may be, in those things especially, which are of greater moment; but that combination doth neither constitute a new forme of a Church, neither ought it to take away, or diminish any way, that liberty and power which Christ hath left to his Churches, for the directing and farthering whereof it onely serves.³¹

Both in New England and in Old England, Congregationalists allowed the use of synods to determine points of doctrine, but denied their use in governing churches. The New England elders admitted that "the consociation of Churches into Classes and Synods we hold to be lawfull, and in some cases necessary."³² And the Independents at the Westminster Assembly concurred:

we judge Synods to be of great use, for the finding out, and declaring of Truth in difficult cases, . . . For the healing offences but we deny a standing use of them³³

Only Puritan Independents on the extreme Left Wing took any other position in regard to synods.³⁴

Although Independents readily admitted that there is a constructive purpose in synods, they also emphasized that such synods were always subject to error because of the frailty of men comprising them. "They are all but men," wrote Thomas Hooker, "and may erre: their judgements given in a synod are not the rule, but must be regulated."³⁵ To avoid fallibility was impossible, even if the most godly men in the kingdom were members of that council. "Call a Synod of the learnedest, and highest esteem in the world," said Henry Burton, "yet even such a Synod may in some things and those fundamentall too, possibly run into, and wrap themselves in foul errors."³⁶ And since all ecclesiastical councils are subject to error, it follows that no one should submit his conscience to the decrees of councils. "A man is not bound in conscience to follow their decrees upon penalty of sin, arrogancy, etc. and not to seeke the least exemption from what they determin whose decrees may be subject to as great errors as any."^{36a}

The Westminster Assembly carefully worded their Confession of Faith regarding the fallibility of Synods:

All synods or councils, since the Apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err; and many have erred. Therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice; but to be used as a help in both. 37

But this was not the position adopted by many Presbyterians, Thomas Edwards contended that "ministers and synods in their interpretations and decisions going accordingly to the Word of God, which is infallible, judge infallibly."³⁸ He believed that a synod which operated on scriptural principles would reach an inerrant conclusion. Samuel Rutherford agreed with Edwards. He held that the formal conscience of the church determined by majority vote in council must be supreme over individual

consciences, because synods have the power to interpret the Word infallibly.³⁹ George Gillespie was just as explicit:

for if they [i.e. a council] decree and determine nothing but from the Scriptures, ...and if they examine all questions according to the Scriptures, and in all their Decrees follow the voyce of the Scripture, then may they affirme that the holy Ghost hath so decreed.⁴⁰

And John Bastwick complained that one of the tenets of the Independents was that they held council decrees to be subject to the individual conscience of every saint: "Whatsoever a State, an Assembly or Councell shall say, ought not to bind the Saints, further then the judgement of those Saints shall leade them."⁴¹

This Presbyterian tendency to impose synodical decrees upon the consciences of men was one of the things which irritated Independents the most.

Truth is compar'd in Scripture to a streaming fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetual progression, they sick'n into a muddy pool of Conformity and Tradition. A man may be a Heretic in the truth; and if he believe things only because his Pastour says so, or the Assembly [i.e. the Westminster Assembly or any assembly] so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true; yet the very truth he holds, becomes his heresie.⁴²

Independents detected in Presbyterian apologetic a certain authoritarianism which ran counter to the spirit of Protestantism. Having thrown off the yoke of Rome and Canterbury, they were not about to embrace a new system with all the evils of the old.

no one mans conscience may be the rule of another;...neither may all the mens consciences in the world be the Judge of any one mans...we find neither rule, example, nor reasons from Scripture, to force men to Religion [by imposing the decrees of a council].⁴³

The government of the Church, according to Independent theory, is a government whereby each particular church has a complete and entire power within itself. There is no higher authority than the authority which rests within each local body of believers. Presbyterian theory, on the other hand, provided for a government of the Church by means of a gradually ascending scale of subordinated assemblies.

why else doth the Apostle charge them all to take heed, to all the Flocke over which the H. G. had made them overseers?

Why Flocke? unless to knit and knead them into one dependency of government upon their assembled Pastors; and why all? unless because all the overseers were to have a joynt Synodall care of all the Congregations?⁴⁴

Not only was there to be a system of inferior and superior courts, but their purpose was to insure the unity and uniformity of the church through the discipline they would render.

We judge that there is an Ecclesiasticall and sacred communion betweene particular Churches, not only as they joyned in a brotherly communion, and professe one common faith and piety; and have and exercise a government and Ecclesiastical discipline in common.⁴⁵

Perhaps the most objectionable feature of Presbyterianism from the standpoint of the Independents, was its insistence on subordinated assemblies which submerged the actual church power of particular churches. Without these higher assemblies, Presbyterians maintained, there could be no effective control of individual churches.⁴⁶ Of all the many Presbyterian writers, George Gillespie gives as clear an exposition of the Presbyterian system of subordinated assemblies as any. The reasons for having a system of subordinated assemblies are many: (1) "That causes common to many congregations, ought not to be judged by any one of them"; (2) "...the greatest part of particular congregations have not in their proper Elderships so many men of sufficient abilities." (3) For "difficult cases" the injured party can "referre the same into a higher Court." (4) "Congregations which lye neare together, ought all as one to keep unity and conformity in Church policy and government." (5) For the sake of any "comperition" or "controversy" between two separate churches. and finally, (6) because "our Classicall Presbyteries have a certaine warrant from the patterne of the Apostolicall Churches."⁴⁷ Gillespie's main contention against the Independents was that their system did not adequately provide for the remedying of heresy within particular churches:

without a subordination among Ecclesiastical Courts, and the authority of the higher above the inferior, it were utterly

impossible to preserve unity, or to make an end of controversie in a Nation.⁴⁸

Because Congregationalists believed that church power was confined to the jurisdiction of each local church, they rejected Presbyterian plans to create a galaxy of ascending courts.

No Church hath power of Government over another, but each of them hath chiefe power within it selfe, and all of them equall power one with another, every Church hath received alike the power of binding and loosing, opening and shutting the Kingdome of Heaven but one of another all of them are Sisters; all of them Sarahs, all of them Queens, none Hagar, none of them Concubines but by their owne corruption or usurpation of others. Finally, all of them, are Candlesticks of the same precious mettell and in the midst of them all Christ equally walketh.⁴⁹

The principle of "independency" got its name from the Congregational repudiation of subordinated assemblies.⁵⁰ In their Apologeticall Narration, the Independents at the Westminster Assembly spent a great deal of their efforts showing that although they did not believe in subordinated assemblies to force churches in matters of discipline, yet they did hold each local church responsible morally to the combined wishes of sister churches. The Apologists claimed that "Churches as well as particular men are bound to give no offense neither to Jew nor Gentile, nor the Churches of God they live amongst."⁵¹ They said that although each church is independent in the sense of having the final word in matters of discipline, yet still that church has a duty regarding its neighbors.⁵²

There are few subjects more discussed than the matter of synods in Thomas Goodwin's book on church government. Assemblies of ministers do have authority, maintained Goodwin:

The Judgment of many Ministers Assembled, hath an Authority of Reverence in it, because they are Wise; yea, and because they are the Ministers of Christ, by whose Judgments, Jesus Christ leadeth Men into Truth; and as they are Ministers of Christ, they have a special Blessing accompanying of them, and all such Respects the Consciences of Men are to take in to move them to yield to what they declare and determine: Yet, still this doth not arise to the consideration of Juridical Authority, which they have from Christ, over those whom they would guide, but such a Man's own Elders have.⁵³

These synods are occasional only and should have no standing institution.⁵⁴ And when they do meet, it is only to advise the churches, not impose sentence or decree upon them.⁵⁵ These occasional synods cannot force churches against their will.⁵⁶

The important thing these assemblies can do is to define doctrine:

we judge Synods to be of great use for the finding out, and declaring of Truth in Difficult cases, and encouragement to walk in the Truth, for the healing offenses: and to give Advice unto the Magistrate, in matters of Religion.⁵⁷

But these synods do not have the power of excommunication as claimed by the Presbyterians.⁵⁸

The synods which Thomas Goodwin envisaged, however, were not new forms of churches. By denying that a synod is a form of church, Goodwin ran counter to Presbyterian apologists, who claimed that synods and presbyteries were representative churches. "We affirm," wrote Apollonius, "that a company of Presbyters met together with Ecclesiasticall jurisdiction for transacting Church affairs, are a Church; to wit, a ministeriall, or a governing and representative Church."⁵⁹ Against this view, Goodwin pointed out that officers "are no where called the Church it self" in Scripture.⁶⁰ He put forth a simile of the elders being eyes in the body [i.e. the church] but the eye can function properly in no other body but their own particular church.⁶¹ Nor can Presbyterians prove their point from history, because even

among the Grecians, *ἐκκλησία* was never used for a representative Meeting only of Officers, but of the People also, and so it is in Acts 19.39, 41. where the People making a tumult, it is called *ἐκκλησία*, although an unlawful one.⁶²

One of the most telling of all of Goodwin's arguments against the Presbyterian "representative church" idea, was that it interfered with the Church's immediate connection with Christ. Presbyterians contended that the primary end of their Presbyteries was to govern the churches, but

Many Churches become one Church to no Officer in the World but Christ, and ...this pretence of the Elders being the Church, would make many Churches one Church to a company of Elders, that they may govern them.⁶³

Furthermore, these "representative churches" have no reason for being other than discipline. This is only part of the function of true churches, because true churches must meet primarily for worship. "*Ecclesia est numerus fidelium... Divino et Disciplina Communicantium*,"⁶⁴ but a Presbyterian Church [i.e. a synod, or presbytery] cannot be such, because it meets for discipline and not for worship. "If such a Presbyterian company of Elders were a Church, then Discipline must merely constitute a Church as a Church," but all divines agree that even churches defective in their execution of discipline are still true churches.⁶⁵ Discipline is not that which constitutes a true Church. Presbyterian theory makes for two kinds of churches; one (a particular church) for worship, and the other (a presbytery or synod) for discipline. In reality, there should be no distinction and both functions are properly recognized in any well ordered Christian community.⁶⁶

Thus, the whole Presbyterian system is too complex. It creates all sorts of churches and courts and assemblies: Congregational, classical, synodical, and national. A multitude of distinctions of offices and jurisdictions must be made to define the intricacies of this mammoth complexity. But Independency is different;

whilst to them, there are many Bodies, and many Churches; and Lords many, and Presbyteries many; our way is single, natural, uniform, and to us there is but one Church, one Presbytery, having mutual relation one to another. One Church for the Seat of Worship, the same Church for the Seat of Discipline; and hereby all these groundless Distinctions are in a few words taken away.⁶⁷

Against subordination, Goodwin was adamant, There was no such thing in the New Testament and those who instigated subordinated assemblies were guilty of adding to the Word of God. "The New Testament is silent in it"; the Apostles never mention it.⁶⁸ Not only are they unbiblical in origin, but to set them up in England would rear "up a Worldly Frame and Theater for Elders, through several Stairs, to enter upon the Heritage of the Lord."⁶⁹

The very basis of subordination of assemblies presupposes that each particular church is not complete in itself with an independent power and authority. Presbyterians say that local churches are true churches, but how can they be true churches if they

are deficient in power? It is a contradiction of terms,⁷⁰ and denies the fundamental principle of all Reformed Churches, "Ecclesiae sunt pares, . . . and Par in parem non habet potestatem."⁷¹

Subordination of assemblies was an intricate part of the Presbyterian doctrine of the universal visible church. And in order to support their contentions and to accredit the representatives in these ascending courts, they made all the elders responsible to the universal visible church rather than to the particular church where they labored.⁷² But here Goodwin began sawing off the limb on which his rivals found themselves. For if each elder in every particular church were automatically an elder in the church universal and visible, then what about support? Should each congregation support all the elders in the world with money?⁷³ But no one does this. Furthermore, there is the analogy of the deacons:

Now if the Deacons Office should thus be extended to all the Congregations, as the Elders is; then why should not each Church be bound to bring Contributions to the Deacons of each Church, to be distributed in common; and so our Purses should be subject to the Deacons in common, as far as our consciences to the Elders in common⁷⁴

Not only did Goodwin urge this argument from analogy against the Presbyterians, but he also reworked one of the stock Puritan arguments against the prelates:

Elders . . . are to Govern only that Flock that they are able to Feed; and therefore they have not the Office of Overseeing, as ordinary Elders over those whom they Feed not. . . I Pet. 5. 2.

Tis one Argument used against Episcopal power, that they are enforced to obey him that speaks not the Word to them, nor watcheth over their Souls; and this holds as well against these Presbyterial Offices.⁷⁵

To have elders in respect of the universal church is a "Popish principle",⁷⁶ worthy more of the Jesuits than of Christian churches.⁷⁷

One of the reasons that prompted Presbyterians to champion their system of subordinated assemblies or courts was that they wanted to insure that no one should wrongfully be convicted of any disciplinary charge. A man could appeal to higher and

higher courts in the hope that he might eventually be exonerated. Against this view, Goodwin stated that from the local church "there can be no Appeal; nor of which no Act of Repeal can be made by any Supream Court of Earth."⁷⁸ Such appeals cannot be a help to keeping scandals out of the church:

How doth the dividing of things thus retard their proceedings, in case of open and manifest Scandals? How must needs so many removes rather harden the Man, than soften him, and in stead of being a means of doing him good, be a vexation to him?⁷⁹

There are no appeals in the Genevan Church set up under Calvin and the system seems to work very well.⁸⁰ And if they were set up in England, Presbyteries would be more busy with appeals than with evangelism and worship. To allow such appeals separated the person from those who know him best and are the better judges of his case. The higher the court of appeal, the more removed he becomes from his friends and neighbor Christians who alone are in a position to judge his repentance with justice.⁸¹

These appeals still being made from one Ecclesiastical Court to another, and those Superior (when the cause is out of the Congregations Hands) consisting most of Pastors, or if of others, yet of Persons Ecclesiastical (for as such they sit in those Assemblies being Homogenial Members of Presbyteries, and lay Elders you will not call them) by this means all causes are taken up into the Clergies Hands, abstracted from the People; and the Clergy will take part one with another, and the one Ratifie what the lower hath done, and the High Commission did what a particular Bishop had done, against an inferior Minister or other.⁸²

One of the strongest arguments which Goodwin brought against the Presbyterian system of subordination was that it would lead to tyranny. History showed that Presbyterianism eventually leads to one man rule. "It is not against the essence," he said, "or the constitution of Government, (as Presbyterial Divines acknowledge) that one Man should be a constant Moderator."⁸³

The tyranny which Thomas Goodwin feared was not the worst of his expectations from the proposed Presbyterian subordinations of assemblies. He believed

that to build up a pyramid of power would eventually enable Antichrist to seize control at the very top and so bring the whole structure under his sway. Only "Antichrist and Bishops would subordinate Officers."⁸⁴ Furthermore, Goodwin was afraid that if democratic practice prevailed in these higher assemblies, that the godly would inevitably be outvoted.

The greater number of Churches professing Religion, are more corrupted; the pure Churches are fewer. It had been ill for Philadelphia and the Angel, and Elders thereof, if those seven Churches in Asia, had been cast into such a Subordinate Association for Government, to be exercised by the Angels and Elders of all the other six Churches, with the rest in Asia. And the like may be said of the purer Reformed Churches in Germany; if the greater number of those that yet were True Churches, should have ruled the lesser; then (Lutherans and Calvinists, being bound to this Government) the Lutherans (being also True Churches, and yet the more in number) would by vertue of this Law, have soon corrupted the purer.⁸⁵

In the light of the foregoing discussion of Independent rejection of Presbyterian notions of a system of subordinated assemblies, the question now arises as to what kind of bond existed amongst Congregational churches. Probably, there was no point in the controversy more misrepresented by Presbyterians than this one. Roughly speaking, the issue was between a "common fellowship" of churches and a "common Presbytery" of churches.⁸⁶ But a loosely knit fellowship of individual congregations was unacceptable to Presbyterians. Daniel Cawdry complained that since the Independents denied any Catholic visible church, it was tantamount to denying "all communion of churches."⁸⁷ John Dury averred that Independency was a "Church Way of Non-Communion".⁸⁸ Congregationalism, asserted Thomas Edwards, "overthrowes Communion of Saints."⁸⁹ According to Samuel Rutherford, the Independents had "no Communion of sister Churches."⁹⁰ And William Prynne steadfastly maintained that Independency did not lend itself to "communion one with another".⁹¹ There was not one of these apologists who

was correct in his assessment of his rivals.

The basic disagreement on the matter of the relationship between churches seemed to be over a spiritual fellowship versus a political integration. It was not fellowship of churches which Congregationalists refused; it was the equating of political integration (i.e. in Presbyteries) with spiritual fellowship. They denied that fellowship was impossible except on a "politick" or uniformitarian basis. But this does not mean that churches did not have a duty towards each other. Far from it. "It was Cain's prophane Spirit that said, Am I my Brother's Keeper? and it savoureth of the Rancor of Cain's Spirit to say, What hath one church to do with another?"⁹² Let Churches have communion jure fraternitatis instead of insisting on a jus jurisdictionis.⁹³ There is a divine necessity for fellowship between churches: "As it was not good for Adam, the New Creature of the First World, to be alone; so nor for the New Creature of Christ's World."⁹⁴ Not to recognize the principle of fellowship in seventeenth century congregation-
alism (as many Presbyterians did) was inexcusable.

every particular congregation be an absolute church, having no jurisdiction over it but Christ alone, and that immediately; yet it is not separated or divided from the neighbour churches, so as that it should not hold communion with them, or a con-
sociation, communicating together in all mutuall offices of helpe, counsel, comfort, resolution in doubts, advice in diffi-
culties, and the like.⁹⁵

The writers of the Apologeticall Narration vehemently denied that they lacked communion between sister churches. From the wording of the document, it would appear that one of the prime factors prompting its publication was the misconceptions abroad concerning the Independent doctrine of church communion.

That it was the most to be abhorred maxime that any Religion hath ever made profession of, and therefore of all other the most contradictory and dishonourable unto that of Christianity, that a single and particular society of men professing the name of Christ, and pretending to be endowed with a power from Christ to judge them that are of the same body and society within themselves, should further arrogate unto themselves as exemption from giving account or being censurable by any other,

either Christian Magistrate above them, or neighbour Churches about them. ⁹⁶

SUMMARY

Section I: It has been alleged by a recent author that Independency and Presbyterianism differed over their respective views of the divine right of church government. In this section we have endeavored to prove the contrary, that both Puritan parties considered their church polity divinely given and binding for all time.

Section J: Both parties had a use for synods. Presbyterians wished them to govern; Congregationalists wished them to decide difficult matters of doctrine. The former made a synod's decree binding on all believers; the latter subjected all such decrees to individual conscience. Presbyterians wanted a universal visible church held together by an integrated series of gradually ascending church assemblies; Independents championed a spiritual and mystical fellowship of churches without any external governmental connection between them.

¹ An excellent example of the Puritan distaste of expediency was the Westminster Assembly debate over whether or not the London ministers should be given the power to ordain. The Commons wanted the Assembly to vote the issue on a pro tempore basis only, but the Scottish Commissioners wanted a precedent set for the whole of their Presbyterian system jure divino. The discussion of the point in the sederunt revolved around the Puritan fear of doing anything which did not have divine approval as clearly evidenced in the Bible. John Lightfoot's The Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines: etc. (Works, ed. by John Rogers Pitman, vol. XIII, London: 1824), p. 125, Jan. 27, 1644, records the interesting exchange of views. Charles Herle's reaction to one proposal of expediency was typical "all things that are 'infra, praeter, or contra regulam', are sin." The rule was jure divino and anything else was suspect, because it was either extra-biblical or anti-biblical. . . anathema to a Puritan divine.

² John Wingate Thornton, The Historical Relation of New England to the English Commonwealth. (Boston: 1874, private printing,) p. 5.

³ Cited by Carruthers, Everyday Work, op. cit., p. 12. This was part of Thomas Cole's message to the House of Lords in the midst of the controversy over jus divinum.

⁴ Thomas Edwards, Gangraena: or A Catalogue and Discovery of many of the Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies and pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this time, etc. (London: 1646), p. 18.

⁵ There are some curious exceptions to this Puritan notion of absolute truth, however. One of them had reference to bringing about the union of different groups of brethren. E. g. the authors of the Heads of Agreement assented to by the United Ministers In and about London: Formerly called Presbyterian and Congregational. (London: 1691), pp. 14, 15, Sect. VIII, recognized both the Westminster Confession of Faith as well as the Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order (1658) as being agreeable to the Word of God. Another example of this type of thing occurred

in the Westminster Assembly debates over the decrees and how they were to be worded in the Confession of Faith. In Alexander F. Mitchell et John Struthers (eds.), Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines etc. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), p.151, Sess. 520, Oct. 20, 1645, it is recorded that George Gillespie moved that the wording should be in such a way that "every one may enjoy his own sense." It was an unusual event to find a Puritan allowing such a subjective interpretation of theological language.

⁶ Samuel Rutherford, A survey of the spirituall Antichrist, Opening the secrets of familisme and antinomianisme, etc. (London: 1648), pp.252, 253.

⁷ Richard Sibbes on the Holy Spirit's speaking in Scripture, as cited in Geoffrey F. Nuttall, The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), p.43.

⁸ John Dury, A Epistolary Discourse... Written by Mr. John Dury to Mr. Tho. Goodwin, et al (London: 1644), p.21.

⁹ Vide Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom with A History of Critical Notes (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878), pp.736, 737, I, for a list of those who wanted Presbytery on a jus humanum basis (including Twisse, Gataker, Reynolds, Palmer, and others), also a list of those who sponsored Presbytery jure divino (including the Scots and the Smectymnuans.)

¹⁰ It is difficult to understand how orthodox Presbyterians who espoused the "developmental theory" of church polity could conscientiously subscribe to a jure divino theory at the same time. Any jus divinum argument had to begin with the assumption that there was a hard and fast rule for church government found in scripture, but as we have pointed out supra, Presbyterians admitted that much of their polity was not found in the New Testament, because the Church was then only in its infancy. Thus, Thomas Edwards, Antapologia: Or a Full Answer to the Apologeticall Narration of Mr. Goodwin, et al. (London: 1646), p.70, is open to criticism when he complains that the Independent doctrine of "progressive interpretation" renders any government jure divino impossible. Edwards asks, "ought men in the matters of Religion, and in things of the Kingdom of Christ to be Scepticks and so irresolved, or ought not men to be preswaded in their consciences?" i.e. by jus divinum proofs.

¹¹ Thomas Cartwright, A Directory of Church-government Drawn up and Used by the Elizabethan Presbyterians (London reprint of 1644 ed. : James Nisbet & Co., 1872), unpagd.

¹² The title of the book which the London ministers produced was Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici or the Divine Right of Church Government Asserted and Evidenced by the Holy Scriptures. (London: 1646).

¹³ Baillie, Letters and Journals, op. cit., p.317, II, public letter, Oct. 14, 1645. Poor Baillie was quite taken with the idea that great opposition always meant that God was on his side. Cf. Journals, op. cit., p.366, II, letter to Spang, April 23, 1646. To this Scot, all opposition came from the devil. Perhaps he had never heard of Balaam?

¹⁴ One of the most misleading articles on this subject is that of Winthrop S. Hudson, of Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, "Denominationalism as a Basis for Ecumenicity: A Seventeenth Century Conception," Church History Vol. XXIV:

No. 1 (March, 1955). On page 36, he writes, "they (ie. the Independents at the Westminster Assembly) objected not only to the Presbyterian claim that the system of church government which they proposed was *jure divino* but were equally unwilling to make such a claim for their own proposals." To support this claim, the author gives the following quotations on page 48, *ftnt.* (15): (1) "The Assembly complained of the Dissenting Brethren that they never endeavored 'to prove that way of church government which they practice to be the only way *jure divino*.'" Cited from *The Answer of the Assembly of Divines* (London: 1645), p. 4. (2) "Thomas Edwards also had complained that in the view of the Independents 'the government and way of the church visible is so uncertain and doubtfull as that little or none may be positively laid down and concluded as *jure divino*!'" Cited from *Antapologia* (London: 1644), p. 85. (3) "The Dissenting Brethren freely acknowledged that this was true, saying that 'the greatest difference. . . betwixt us being this, that the forms of government you pretend to (and we deny) are asserted to be *jure divino*.'" Cited from *A Copy of a Remonstrance* (London: 1645), p. 5. Hudson's conclusion then, is this: "Beyond this fundamental disagreement as to the extent to which divine sanction could be claimed for a particular ecclesiastical structure, the difference between the two parties was not great" (page 36). The aim of his article is to show that the Independent repudiation (so-called) of *jure divino* polity is a basis for ecumenical union. Whatever the merits of such an enterprise, we must say that this is an oversimplification of more complex issues which separated the Presbyterians from the Independents. Furthermore, as we shall proceed to show *infra*, the Westminster Assembly Presbyterians (quotation no. "1", *Supra*), were sadly mistaken about what their rivals actually believed; that Edwards (quotation no. "2", *supra*), was both mistaken about the Independents and compromised because of Presbyterian "developmental" concepts of polity; and finally, that the Independents may have denied divine right to Presbytery (quotation no. "3", *supra*), but they did not intend to deny it to their own polity. Our main criticism of Mr. Hudson is that he has injected twentieth century ideas back into seventeenth century settings. His view is Erastian. Thomas Goodwin et al. always refused to subscribe to it.

¹⁵ John Lightfoot's *Journal*, *op. cit.*, p. 20, Oct. 17, 1643, records the fact that Thomas Goodwin wished to discuss the question of whether or not there is any rule for Church Government in the Scripture. Lightfoot, however, proposed that the Assembly first debate church government. Selden, on the other hand, wanted to define the "church" first. Selden and the Independents were outvoted. And by so doing, the Assembly paved the way for much of the controversy over *jus divinum* which followed. Goodwin, writing in his *Of the Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ* (Works, 1696 ed.), p. 176, complained that this event caused the Presbyterians to resort to the phrase "it may be" in their presbyterian propositions, when they should have been able to say "it should be". In other words, Goodwin did not approve of anything ecclesiastical which did not lay claim to an exclusive divine right. Goodwin pointed out that by refusing to discuss divine right first, the Presbyterian "proposition is so cast, that we must directly oppose it with such grounds, as may shew, that this Presbyterian may not be, without troubling our selves to consider, which of the Forme of Government this should be" (p. 176, *ibid.*). Thus, the Independents did not know what they were arguing against, because the Presbyterian system was not set up yet and the Assembly had refused to define what they meant (p. 179, *ibid.*). This turn of events eventually forced the Independents to argue against the *de facto* church in Scotland, rather than in favor of whatever polity the Assembly might decide on from the Scriptures. And of course, this brought the Scots into conflict with the Dissenting Brethren. For this reason, Goodwin was pleased about the Parliamentary queries concerning divine right, when he wrote the "Epistle" to Thomas Hooker's *A Survey*

of the Summe of Church-Discipline, etc. (London: 1648), unpagcd. Goodwin writes that at long last the Assembly will have to discuss the jus divinum of church government. On this whole problem, vide Hetherington, op. cit., p. 153; R. W. Dale, History of English Congregationalism (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), p. 270; at Thomas Goodwin et al., A Copy of a Remonstrance Lately Delivered in to the Assembly (London: 1645), p. 5. The only conclusion we can reach is that Thomas Goodwin had more concern for establishing church polity jure divino than many in the Assembly calling themselves Presbyterians.

¹⁶Richard Mather, Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed, In an Answer of the Elders of the severall Churches in New-England To two and thirty Questions, sent over to them by divers Ministers in England to declare their judgments therein. etc. (London: 1643), questions 30, 31.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 83. Cited by Henry M. Dexter, Congregationalism: What it is; Whence it is; How it works, Why it is better than Any Other Form of Church Government; and Its Consequent Demands. (Boston: Nichols and Noyes, 1865), on fly leaf. It should be noted that the elders admitted that they might be erroneous in their opinion, but they were still "perswaded of it".

¹⁸Henry Burton, A Vindication of churches, commonly called Independent: etc. (London: 1644), p. 33.

¹⁹Christ on His Throne. or, Christs Church-government briefly laid downe; and how it ought to bee set up in all Christian Congregations. Resolved in Sundry Cases of Conscience. (n.p.: 1640), p. 14.

²⁰Cf. Arthur Barker, Milton and the Puritan Dilemma 1641-1660 (The University of Toronto Press, 1942), pp. 19-34, Chap. II, "The One Right Discipline."

²¹An Apologeticall Narration Humbly Submitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament by Tho. Goodwin et al. (London: 1643), p. 10. In the light of such statements as cited in Christ on His Throne, supra, and from the Narration, it is plain that the Independents believed their polity to be jure divino in so far as they practiced it. They admitted, however, that God still might have more light and truth to break forth from His Word. Vide supra on progressive interpretation. Therefore, Ephraim Pagitt, in his Heresiography, Or a Discription of the Heretickes and Sectaries Sprang up in these latter times. etc. (fourth edition, London: 1647), "The Epistle Dedicatory", unpagcd, is incorrect in saying that the Independents "pretend that they have a perfect model of church government." Nothing could be more untrue of the Independent position. Cf. Lewis Du Moulin, The Conformity of the Discipline and Government of those who are commonly called Independents to that of the ancient Primitive Christians (London: 1680), p. 59.

²²Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 39, italics mine.

²³Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 215.

²⁴Ibid., p. 163.

²⁵Ibid., p. 132.

²⁶Ibid., p. 90.

²⁷If the foregoing does not show that Hudson's view is erroneous, then we would direct the reader to Thomas Goodwin's Constitution of Churches, op. cit., Book II, p. 41ff, entitled, "Of the Divine Institution of a Congregational Church etc.". The fact that Thomas Goodwin championed a jure divino polity was one of the things to which John Goodwin took exception in his correspondence with the former. Vide Two Letters Which passed between the Reverend Mr. John Goodwin and the Author, concerning a Church-Covenant. (appended to the fourth volume of the Works of Thomas Goodwin, 1696 ed.), p. 38. Thomas Goodwin's sentiments in all these affairs are paralleled by another outstanding Congregational writer. Vide W. Bartlet, IX NOTPAQIA or a Model of the Primitive Congregational way: etc. (London: 1647), p. 78ff., Chap. IV, "That this Church-state, with the Officers, Ordinances, and administrations therunto appertaining, is of perpetuall use, to the coming again of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the instituter of it, without either alteration, or cessation."

²⁸Vide Albert Peel, The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order, 1658 (London: Independent Press, 1939), Sect. XXVI of the part on "Order". Cf. S. W. Carruthers, The Westminster Confession of Faith (Manchester: R. Aikman and Son, 1937), p. 153, Chap. XXXI "Of Synods and Councils" (not in Savoy), Sect. I.

²⁹David Laing (ed.), The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, 1841), p. 205, II, July 5, 1644, to Spang. Vide supra. The issue, of course went to the roots of the controversy, because it involved the whole question of the extent of the jurisdiction of particular churches. Cf. Richard Baxter, Church Concord: etc. (London: 1691), p. 21ff., Chap. V, "Of the Extent of a particular Church". Guilielmus Apollonii, A Consideration of Certain Controversies at this time agitated in the Kingdome of England etc. (London: 1645), has a Chapter on the subject "Of Ecclesiastical Power". Vide Chap. IV, p. 43ff. Samuel Rutherford, in his A peaceable and Temperate Plea For Pauls Presbyterie In Scotland, etc. (London: 1642), likewise discusses the problem in propositions 3, 4, 13, 15, 16.

³⁰The search for an adequate statement of Independent thought concerning the use of councils is not ended yet. Vide Douglas Horton, Congregationalism: A Study in Church Polity (London: 1952), p. 17, Chap. II.

³¹William Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the holy Scriptures, and the Interpreters thereof, and brought into Method (London: n.d.), p. 179. Strangely enough, the Independents who followed Ames, discovered that they had some other more notable company. Baxter reported that Archbishop Ussher "of his own accord. . . told me confidently, 'That synods are not properly for government, but for agreement among the pastors; and a synod of bishops are not the governors, of any one bishop there present.'" Vide J. M. Lloyd Thomas (ed.), The Autobiography of Richard Baxter. (Everyman's Library, London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1931), p. 141. The position of Baxter, himself, regarding synods, is somewhat contradictory. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Visible Saints (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 66, has some correspondence showing that Baxter was very close to the Independent view of councils. Yet Dr. Nuttall also quotes from the Reliquiae Baxterianae (II, 14, p. 144 and App. IV, p. 76), where Baxter asserted that Independents "too much exploded Synods." Vide Visible Saints, p. 100. Whatever Baxter really thought about Synods, at least one of his contemporaries quoted him in favor of the Independent point of view. Vide Lewis Du Moulin, The Conformity of the Discipline and Government of those who are commonly called Independents to that of the Ancient Primitive Christians (London: 1680), p. 14, who cites "the great Arch-Bishop of Armagh, and Mr. Baxter" favoring the Independent idea of synods.

³² Richard Mather, Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed, etc. (London: 1643), p. 64. Cf. Thomas Hooker, A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline etc. (London: 1648), p. 1, Part IV, et John Norton, Responsio ad Totam Quaestionum Syllogen a clarissimo Viro Domino Guilielmo Apollonio, etc. (London: 1648), p. 109ff, Chap. X, "De Classibus et Synodis".

³³ Thomas Goodwin and Jeremiah Whitaker (eds.), The Grand Debate Concerning Presbitery and Independency By the Assembly of Divines convened at Westminster etc. (London: 1652), p. 115, part of the Reasons. Vide our appendix for a list of dissents. They dissented to all the propositions concerning the use of synods as voted by the Assembly.

³⁴ One of these extremists was William Dell, who wrote in his Uniformity Examined, Whether it be found in the Gospel, or In the Practice of the Churches, of Christ (London: 1651), p. 49, that "the spiritual Church is taught by the anointing (of the Holy Spirit), the carnal Church by Councils." Only the radicals would separate the leading of the Holy Spirit entirely from the meeting of godly men in a synod. Some of the Presbyterians seemed to confine the Holy Spirit's operation to their "godly synods", but these two views were exaggerated. An interesting story was told by Henry Burton, in his A Vindication of Churches, commonly called Independent; etc. (London: 1644), p. 16, which illustrates the typical Independent fear that synods might not have the leading of the Holy Spirit: "A Cardinall in the Conclave at Viterbium, after almost three yeares agitation about the election of a New Pope, (as many yeares as we have been about to set up a Reformation, and the foundation not yet laid) each Cardinall ambitiously aspiring to be the Pope, one of them rose up and said, Domine, etc. let us uncover the rooffe of this Chamber, seeing the holy Ghost cannot get unto us through so many tiles."

³⁵ Hooker, Survey, op. cit., p. 2.

³⁶ Henry Burton, Conformitie's deformity, etc. (London: 1646), p. 3.

^{36a} [John Goodwin], Certain briefe Observations. . . etc. (London: 1644), pp. 12, 13. Cf. Burton, Vindication, op. cit., p. 12.

³⁷ Carruthers, Westminster Confession, op. cit., p. 154, Chap. XXXI, "Of Synods and Councils", Sect. IV. Nor was this a new innovation in doctrine, because the Thirty Nine Articles had also admitted the possibility of error in councils.

³⁸ Thomas Edwards, The casting downe of the Last stronghold of Satan. etc. (London: 1647), p. 154, as cited in Jordan, op. cit., p. 283, III.

³⁹ Cf. Samuel Rutherford, A free disputation against pretended liberty of conscience etc. (London: 1649), p. 23, who tells "how a Synod compelleth" a man's conscience.

⁴⁰ Gillespie, An Assertion, op. cit., p. 208.

⁴¹ John Bastwick, Independency Examined, Unmasked, and Refuted (London: 1656), "Epistle to the Reader", unpagued. Cf. Apollonius, op. cit., p. 89ff. chap. VI, "Of Classes, and Synods, and their authority"; et William Prynne, Twelve Considerable Serious Questions touching Church Government etc. (London: 1644) question "2".

⁴² John Milton, Areopagitico, a Speech for the Liberty of unlicens'd Printing,

to the Parliament of England. (Vol. I of A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton, etc. (Amsterdam: 1698)), p. 436. Cf. Du Moulin, op. cit., p. 8.

⁴³Burton, A Vindication, op. cit., p. 40. One of the most remarkable statements about this came from the lips of one who was not an Independent. Vide William Chillingworth, The Religion of Protestants A Safe way to Salvation (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846 edition), p. 121.

⁴⁴Charles Herle, The Independency on Scriptures of the Independency of Churches; etc. (London: 1643), p. 18, on Acts 20:28.

⁴⁵Apollonius, op. cit., pp. 90, 91.

⁴⁶Robert Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time (London: 1646), p. 112; Samuel Rutherford, A Peaceable and Temperate Plea For Pauls Presbyteria In Scotland, etc. (London: 1642), propositions "13", "15", "16" deal with subordination of synods. Independents vehemently denied this charge. Vide Thomas Goodwin et al., An Apologeticall Narration etc. (London: 1643), p. 16 for an answer to many of such Presbyterian accusations. Cf. Burton's answer in A Vindication, op. cit., p. 21.

⁴⁷Gillespie, An Assertion, op. cit., pp. 137, 138.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 187.

⁴⁹John Cotton, The True Constitution of a particular visible Church, proved by Scripture, etc. (London: 1642), p. 12. Cf. John Cotton's The Keyes Of the Kingdom of Heaven, etc. (London: 1644, reprinted by Tappan and Dennet, 1843), p. 44.

⁵⁰The name of "Independency" presented a semantic problem in the seventeenth century. Presbyterians generally misunderstood it and Independents often had to redefine it in order to absolve themselves from aspersions based on inaccuracy. Baillie's Dissuasive, op. cit., p. 102. William Fyenne, Twelve Questions, op. cit., p. 7 prop. "12", give the typical Presbyterian viewpoint. For the Independents, Vide Thomas Goodwin, Of the Constitution, Order, and Discipline of the Churches of Christ (Works, 1696 ed.), p. 221, IV. The Apologeticall Narration, op. cit., p. 23. John Cook, What the Independents Would have, etc. (London: 1647), p. 2. Hugh Peters, "Epistle to the Reader", unpagd. of Richard Mather's Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed, etc. (London: 1643). One of the better known Congregational writers who did not jettison the name of "Independent" was Henry Burton in his Vindication, p. 42, as cited by Baillie's Dissuasive, op. cit., p. 132.

⁵¹Apologeticall Narration. op. cit., p. 17.

⁵²Ibid., p. 21.

⁵³Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 225.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 143. Cf. Cotton's Keyes, op. cit., p. 84, "Synods meet but seldome."

⁵⁵Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 228.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 203.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 211.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 143. To support this point, Goodwin says that the synods in Holland never excommunicated anyone. . . even the Arminians and Anabaptists. Furthermore, neither Thomas Cartwright nor John Paget (two English Presbyterians) allowed synods to excommunicate. Vide Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 205.

⁵⁹Apollonius, op. cit., p. 37. Cf. Gillespie, An Assertion, op. cit., p. 32, who attempts to prove that there are representative churches on the basis of Exodus 12:3, 21. Gillespie says that God spake unto "all the congregation of Israel" but the context shows that only the "elders of Israel" were present. Vide supra on Old Testament versus New Testament.

⁶⁰Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 65. At least one modern scholar has made the erroneous observation that Goodwin believed that synods were "representative churches" or "churches of churches". But this was true only of John Cotton and John Robinson, not of Goodwin. Douglas Horton, Congregationalism: A Study in Church Polity (London: 1952), p. 25, writes: "The 'Dissenting Brethren' in 1648, illustrating this thesis (i.e. about a synod being a church of churches) from the account of the Jerusalem Synod in Acts XV, say in so many words: 'The Elders of . . . Jerusalem (when this once became a synod by the addition of the Elders of other Churches) ceased to be any longer a Presbytery (that is, a group of Elders) to that Church, and must become with them a new body to all the Churches, these other Elders did come from'; citing the Reasons of the Dissenting Brethren (London: 1648), p. 28. Horton seems to overlook two things about the Dissenting Brethren: (1) this quotation does not refer to this "new body to all the churches" as a "church", and (2) the debates in the Westminster Assembly as well as Goodwin's subsequent book on government clearly reveal that he did not agree with Cotton and Robinson on this matter of making a synod a "representative church". Furthermore, Goodwin was often embarrassed by Cotton's view of synods. Goodwin's concept of synods was different from Cotton's or Robinson's primarily because his thought was developed during day to day argumentation with the most learned Presbyterians of the century. Horton does not realize what a massive influence the Westminster Assembly had on the theory of the Independents which was not true of Congregationalists across the Atlantic. And, of course, John Robinson was dead when the Assembly met.

⁶¹Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 65.

⁶²Ibid., p. 73.

⁶³Ibid., p. 74. Vide supra on derivation of power from Christ to the Church.

⁶⁴Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 75, citing an article of the Church of England.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 76.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 68.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 122. One of the hallmarks of Puritanism was its insistence on simplicity. In this respect, Independency was far closer to the core of the move-

ment than Presbyterianism which was a highly complex system of government. Undoubtedly, this contributed to the eventual failure of Presbyterianism in England.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 213.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 2. Some Presbyterians despaired of founding their system of subordinated assemblies on anything in the New Testament and had to resort to analogies with the civil courts. This opened the way for much Independent criticism. Vide e.g. Gillespie. An Assertion, op. cit., p. 154.

⁷⁰Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 62.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 208.

⁷²Vide Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 114, for a rather involved statement of this Presbyterian doctrine, viz. of each elder being an elder of the universal visible church. Scottish tradition here ran counter to English tradition and the Independents exploited it to the full.

⁷³Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 187.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 188, 189.

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 191, 192.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 152.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 153.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 3.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 125. Cf. p. 199.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 198.

⁸¹Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p. 200.

⁸²Ibid., p. 221, mispaged, it should be p. 201. Although Goodwin was confused about lay elders in Presbyterianism, his statement nevertheless shows the distinction which should be made between Scottish and English Presbyterians regarding lay elders. The English were never reconciled to them although they were at the heart of Scottish government. The statement also shows a typical Thomas Goodwin mode of attack. . . i.e. by playing on the innate hatred of the prelates and the Court of high Commission. Again and again, Thomas Goodwin attempted to show the similarities between Presbyterianism and discredited Anglicanism. Cf. pp. 158, 214, Ibid.

⁸³Ibid., p. 157. This is a very interesting statement in the light of recent discussions between Anglicans and Presbyterians over the possibility of union. The interest is not so much in the fact that an Independent of the calibre of Thomas Goodwin suspected that Presbyterianism led eventually to one man tyranny, (what else could be expected from a Congregationalist champion?) but rather that seventeenth century Presbyterians should have admitted that one man could be permanent moderator. If this be true, then there is definitely a precedent for

the "bishops in Presbytery" scheme proposed and now so hotly debated in Scotland. Cf. Frederick J. Powicke, "Richard Baxter's Via Pacis," Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England, Vol. 2 (1920-1923), which is a discussion of Baxter's "bishops in presbytery" scheme of reunion between Presbyterians and Anglicans."

⁸⁴Ibid., p.282. Cf. Henry Burton, A Vindication, op. cit., p.23. A hierarchical pyramid of power which antichrist could control at the top was one of the governing fears of many Independent apologists who conceived that the only way to thwart such an eventuality was through decentralization of ecclesiastical control. Cf. Goodwin, op. cit., p.6, et supra on eschatology.

⁸⁵Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.215. Certainly, it may be said that Goodwin had a keener sense of minority rights than those of his brethren who did not share his experiences in the Westminster Assembly.

⁸⁶Gillespie, An Assertion, op. cit., p.126.

⁸⁷Daniel Cawdry, The Inconsistencie of the Independent way, etc. (London: 1651). "Epistle to the Dissenting Brethren", unpag'd. This shows the typical Presbyterian misconception of the spiritual fellowship insisted upon by the Independents.

⁸⁸A Epistolary Discourse. . . Written by Mr. John Dury to Mr. Tho. Goodwin, et al. (London: 1644), p.20f.

⁸⁹Thomas Edwards, Reasons against the Independent Government of Particular Congregations: etc. (London: 1641), p.20.

⁹⁰Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries etc. (London: 1644), pp.324-329. Cf. pp.346-351.

⁹¹William Prynn, Twelve Questions, op. cit., p.3, Prop. "6".

⁹²Thomas Goodwin, The Government and Discipline of the Churches of Christ, propos'd familiarly by way of Question and Answer. (Works, 1696 ed.), p.21, Vol. IV.

⁹³Thomas Goodwin, Constitution of Churches, op. cit., p.228.

⁹⁴Ibid., p.242, mispag'd, it should be p.244. The analogy of church fellowship with Adam and Eve's relationship in the Garden of Eden was not patented by Independents, however. Cf. Robert Baillie, Dissuasive, op. cit., p.196.

⁹⁵Christ on His Throne, or, Christs Church-government briefly laid downe; and how it ought to bee set up in all Christian Congregations, etc. (London: 1640), p. 59. Cf. Henry Burton, A Vindication, op. cit., p.18.

⁹⁶Apologeticall Narration, op. cit., p.21. Cf. Savoy Declaration, op. cit., Sect. XXV of "Order"; Richard Mather, Church-government, op. cit., pp.4, 5,

CONCLUSION

The deluge of seventeenth-century theological argument as represented by the Presbyterian-Independent controversy still covers the earth. In our day, the waters have scarcely begun to assuage in spite of the fact that three hundred years have come and gone.¹ We believe that the principal reason for this has been the inability of ecumenical engineers to gauge the depth of the inundation. Few theological controversies have been so palpably misunderstood and many writers have figuratively drowned, because they misjudged the current.²

Our main contention in this study is that the Synodical-Congregational dispute of Puritan times was much more than an argument about church government. The fashioning of a consistent ecclesiology involved other theological doctrines as well, and those who would condense the Presbyterian-Independent quarrel have often been guilty of oversimplification. It was not just "order vs. liberty" or "presbytery vs. congregations". It was an entire theological point of view as applied specifically to the concept of the Church and influenced by eschatological preconceptions.

Thomas Goodwin's place in this controversy is the more important because in him were combined the two principal ingredients of the conflict, premillennialism and congregationalism. He was one of the main figures at the Westminster Assembly,³ possibly the most influential ecclesiastical planner under Cromwell, and one of the greatest Puritans of all time. The failure of Presbyterianism was due as much to his efforts as to any other single man's.

Most of the theological problems surrounding the Presbyterian-Independent controversy have persisted into the twentieth century, thus certifying Solomon's famous dictum that there "is nothing new under the sun".

¹One of the strangest phenomena to come about in the three hundred years since the 1640-1660 era is the shift in emphasis among the various successors of the Puritan parties. There has been a tendency for Presbyterians to espouse the tenets which seventeenth century Congregationalists championed, and a corresponding proclivity for many Congregationalists to "Presbyterianize". As early as the end of the seventeenth century, we can see the beginning of this tendency to shift positions. Vide Richard Taylor, A History of the Union Between the Presbyterian and Congregational Ministers, In and About London: And the Causes of the Breach of it, (second edition, London: 1698), where it is recorded that the Presbyterians were now defending at least three characteristically Independent concepts: (1) the reformed churches were not the last word in matters of theological dispute; p. 6 (2) the first reformers were not infallible; pp. 7, 25; (3) progressive interpretation; p. 25. Of all Independent doctrines, perhaps the one of progressive interpretation has been borrowed as much as any by subsequent Presbyterian writers. Cf. R. M'Cheyne Edgar, Progressive Presbyterianism: A Plea For Liberty and Enterprise In The Church (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton & Co., 1894), p. 160ff., chap. XIII, "The Duty of Advancing With the Times"; R. D. Whitehorn, "The Westminster Assembly and the spirit of its age", The Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England, vol. 8 (1944-47), p. 92.

But if succeeding Presbyterian champions have tended to Congregationalize in some respects, many Congregational brethren have wandered further from their original opinions. Here is a partial list of instances: (1) doctrine of an infallible Bible. Cf. P. T. Forsyth, Faith, Freedom, and the Future (London: Independent Press, 1955) pp. 210, 262; Daniel Jenkins, Congregationalism: A Restatement (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), pp. 16, 19, 21; et our chap. on "Divine Right". (2) opposition to women preachers. Cf. our chap. on the "Ministry"; et Norman Goodall, Congregationalism Plus (London: 1955), pp. 41, 43. (3) doctrine of baptism being offered only to children of church members. Now, Congregationalists baptize children of parents outside the church. Cf. Douglas Horton, Congregationalism: A Study in Church Polity (London: 1952), p. 81; et Jenkins, op. cit., p. 95. (4) Church Discipline in some Congregational mission fields and churches is handled almost exclusively by the eldership instead of by the "people". Cf. Goodall, op. cit., p. 22; et Jenkins, op. cit., p. 99. (5) Election of ministers not confined to members of

particular churches where the minister is to serve. Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 99, implies that other churches should have a voice in choosing neighboring ministers. (6) A centralization of church power in the hands of higher ecclesiastical assemblies is now taking place in Congregational circles. Goodall, *op. cit.*, p. 7; Horton, *op. cit.*, p. 20; furthermore, Horton defends the seventeenth-century Presbyterian idea that "a council is a kind of congregation" (*ibid.*, p. 17). There are even indications that the seventeenth-century opposition to a universal visible church is being softened by the heat of modern ecumenical discussion. Cf. Goodall, *op. cit.*, p. 58f; Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 85. (7) Forsyth, *op. cit.*, p. 262, defended a new chiliasm without the second coming.

Such a list as we have here outlined imparts the unavoidable conclusion that there has been a marked "Presbyterianization" going on in the camp of modern Congregationalists. In matters of baptism, eschatology, church discipline, election of ministers, and councils, this tendency is evident. The most striking of all, perhaps, is the centralization of church power that has come about since the seventeenth century. It is this centralization which men like Goodwin feared most in the Presbyterian scheme, because they felt that it would enable anti-christ to seize control at the top of such organizational hierarchies. Undoubtedly, there are many modern Independents who would not agree with some of the opinions of their fellows cited here, but the only point we wish to emphasize is that there has definitely been a crossing over from Presbyterian to Independent ideas and vice versa since the seventeenth century. The lines of the controversy have not been maintained in their original clarity.

²In spite of the cumulative evidence which we have grouped together in this thesis, there have been few writers in either recent or seventeenth-century times who dared to admit that the Presbyterians and Independents were worlds apart in many theological conceptions. The tendency has often been to play down the differences between the two groups of Puritans in the hope of eventual ecclesiastical rapprochement. Cf. Winthrop S. Hudson, "Denominationalism As a Basis for Ecumenicity: A Seventeenth Century Conception", *Church History*, XXIV:1 (March, 1955), p. 36; J. B. Marsden, *The History of the Later Puritans etc.* (second edition, London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1854), p. 71; Peter Taylor Forsyth, *Faith Freedom & the Future* (London: Independent Press Ltd., 1955 reprint), p. 133; et Alexander F. Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1883), p. 200f. Puritans themselves, usually agreed with this group of moderns. They felt that Presbyterians and Independents were very close together and that ecclesiastical agreement was just around the corner. One of the most quoted authors of the time was Charles Herle, in his *The Independency on Scriptures of the Independency of Churches*, etc. (London: 1643), "Dedictory", unpagged: "for the difference betweene us and our brethren that are for Independency, 'tis nothing so great as you seemed to conceive it, we doe but (with Abraham and Lot) take severall wayes, we are as (Abraham speakes) brethren still, and (as they were) ready to rescue each other on all occasions against the common enemy; our difference 'tis such as doth at most but ruffle a little the fringe, not any way rend the Garment of Christ. . . ." Cf. *One More Blow at Babylon: etc.* (London: 1650), p. 3. In the Assembly, Jeremiah Whitaker made a speech on Sept. 9, 1644, in which he said that "our differences are not great". Vide S. W. Carruthers, *The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly* (Philadelphia: published jointly by the Presbyterian Historical Societies of England and America, (1943), p. 75. *The An Apologeticall Narration etc.* (London: 1643), written by Thomas Goodwin et al. claimed to differ less with Presbyterianism than the apologists had among themselves, three years before. Vide p. 30. At the end of the century, the

Presbyterians and Independents published their Heads of Agreement assented to by the United Ministers In and about London: Formerly called Presbyterian and Congregational (London: 1691), in which they stated: "in all substantials we are fully of one mind" (cited from the unpagged "Preface to the reader").

Three of the greatest apostles of ecclesiastical peace were John Dury, Richard Baxter, and Jeremiah Burroughs. The last named divine pointed out many areas of agreement between Presbyterians and Independents in his Heart Divisions. Cf. his A Vindication of Mr. Burroughes, Against Mr. Edwards his foule Aspersions, in his spreading Gangraena, and his Angry Antiapologia. etc. (London: 1646) p.11. Richard Baxter's Church Concord etc. (London: 1691), p.15-55, has a list of ten supposed differences between Presbyterians and Independents which are reconciled by Baxter. John Dury had a similar ambition to Baxter's: "By the Grace of God I may be able to let them see that they (i. e. Presbyterians and Independents) really agree in all those meanes which are any way Fundamentall" (cited in J. Minton Batten's, John Dury Advocate of Christian Reunion (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1944), p.1031. Cf. Dury's A Epistolary Discourse Written. . . to Mr. Tho. Goodwin et al. etc. (London: 1644), p.22. Still another author who pointed to the seeming agreement of the two greatest Puritan parties was Lewis Du Moulin, in his The Conformity of the Discipline and Government of those who are commonly called Independents to that of the Ancient Primitive Christians. (London: 1680), p.13.

³We have traced some of Goodwin's exploits in the Assembly in the appendix volume. Vide articles "B" (Goodwin as the leader of the Dissenting Brethren), "D" (Dissent in the Assembly), et "C" (Participation in the Debates).

History, like a kind Mistress, leads us
by the hand into her delightful Gardens,
and there reads Lectures upon every Flow-
er, Plant, and Weed, and truly acquaints
us how this and the other sped well or
ill; and then assures us our Fortune will
be the same, if we be not so wise as to
take her word, but will be trying over
again the same Experiments upon our selves
or others. ---

George Bates, Ennchus Motuum Nuperorum (1685),
unpagged "Preface to the Reader".